

August 26, 2005

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I'm back from vacation and everyone's asking me how it went and what I did. It went very well - precisely because I did so little! Here are some of the things I like about being on vacation:

- not carrying a beeper 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- not wearing shoes for three weeks in a row (sandals only!)
- wearing shorts and not slacks for three solid weeks
- having the time to read three or four newspapers a day, leisurely, and to try my hand at the crossword puzzle in each one
- not having to look at my schedule book to see what I'm doing next.

I spent the first week of my vacation by myself on the Cape, meeting Fr. Tom Mahoney, a friend, at the end of that week and traveling to Maine with him for a few days. From there I drove to New York state to visit some friends. A pleasant stay with them was interrupted by a trip to the ER when I experienced muscle spasms in my lower back which extended my NY visit. I had to change some plans for the end of my time off because driving wasn't a comfortable position to be in. Returning to Massachusetts, I ended up spending some more time on the Cape and returned to Concord this past Sunday night. No sight seeing and no bus tours - just much needed time off...

I'm pleased that Fr. Ron Coyne was so well received in the parish in the time he spent here covering for me on my vacation. He left a letter on my desk before he left in which he spoke glowingly and gratefully for the opportunity to serve the people Holy Family Parish for three weeks. He was deeply impressed by your prayer on the Lord's Day and the care with which our liturgical ministers exercise their responsibilities. He included a special thank you to Pat Waggett and Sheila Spooner in the parish office who made him feel at home in his temporary assignment. Ron and I are classmates - I've known him for 40 years. I'm pleased that he was here and that his experience of our parish was so positive.

As of August 16, Sr. Rose Marie Lipke has joined our staff as a full time Pastoral Associate! Some of you have met her already and I will be introducing her at Mass on the next several weekends. Rose Marie will be taking on pastoral responsibilities and you will meet her in a variety of circumstances. After Labor Day, when our parish travelers have come home to roost, I'll write again about her position and ministry.

During the month of September, we will be installing a new sound system in the church. The speakers will be Bose products and the installation will be done by StarSound Music of Salem, New Hampshire. For the most part, we will not be using the microphones you are accustomed to. The priest, deacons, readers and cantors will each wear a clear head set on one ear, with a thin mic extending across the cheek and in front of the speaker's lips. I know this sounds strange but I've seen these instruments in use and two things are evident: first, after a few minutes, you won't even notice them and second - you'll be able to hear!!!

URGENT: Our food pantry is empty but the people it supplies are still in need. Especially needed are: cereal, sugar, coffee, paper towels, toilet paper, napkins, canned goods (potatoes, peas, mixed vegetables, tomatoes, tomato paste(and dry soup., PLEASE remember to pick up some of these items this week and bring them to church next weekend.

And remember: beginning next weekend we go back to our regular Sunday schedule of Mass at 7:30, 9:30 and 11:30 a.m.

Sincerely,
Fr. Fleming