

August Five Ways E-Letter

August 17, 2022

Many thanks for your prayers for my six hour drive to Norwich, NY, on July 25, to assist the incapacitated pastor of my home parish. Fr. Ralph Bove is very slowly recovering from a serious back injury. Please keep him in your prayers. My 13 days helping out allowed me to meet my cousins, classmates and many friends, including my high school reunion on Aug. 6.

Pope Francis has written a very moving address "Meeting with Indigenous Peoples and Members of the Parish Community of Sacred Heart, Edmonton, Canada, July 25, 2022." It is just a little over 4 pages long and may be found on the Vatican website www.vatican.va/content, typing in the place and date.

Consider this key passage about reconciliation: "The word 'reconciliation' is in fact practically synonymous with the word 'Church.' It comes from the word 'council,' and it means 'meet again in council.' The Church is the house where we 'conciliate' anew, where we meet to start over and to grow together. It is the place where we stop thinking as individuals and acknowledge that we are brothers and sisters of one another. Where we look one another in the eye, accept the other's history and culture, and allow the mystique of togetherness, so pleasing to the Holy Spirit, to foster the healing of wounded memories. . . . To pray together, to help one another, to share life stories, common joys and common struggles: this is what opens the door to the reconciling work of God (p. 4).

On the down side, parishes in the USA were told that we can no longer sing the Hispanic/English hymn "Pescador de Hombres, Lord, You Have Come to the Seashore." Its author, Father Cesareo Gabarain (1936-91) was credibly accused during his lifetime of sexual abuse of minors. It does seem a bit much to remove his hymns from use. An Oblate priest who has ministered in prisons on the federal, state and local level told me that this hymn is one of the most loved by the prisoners.

We certainly need the Holy Spirit to accept the good which abusers have done, while we work with all our might to repair the harm they have done. I'm not sure we know what zero tolerance of abusers means regarding their good work.

While I was in Norwich, NY, the Syracuse Diocese published their report on synodality. I hope to post a summary of it on the Mission-Unity-Dialogue website soon. Meanwhile that website (www.harrywinter.org) does have 3 reports on synodality posted on the home page.

As summer winds down, may we thank God for the opportunity which we in the USA have to take a vacation. During these final days of summer vacation time, let us work with other Christians to bring Christ to all around us.

In His love,

Father Harry Winter, O.M.I.