

Twenty Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
September 23, 2018
Fr. Rick Lorenz

Reflection

Between being on vacation and going through the power failure, I didn't have a chance to write up my homily, but here is a summary of what I told the people.

"Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." On Saturday morning, I spent time with the army. The soldiers woke up early to go shooting...but as a chaplain I just watched. They are serving Queen and country. But they too were affected by the power failure. One soldier's cell phone ran out of power, so he missed his alarm and had to scramble to get there on time. Another faced a long line at A&W for breakfast. All were affected by slow drives through intersections without signal lights and four-way stop rules. But behind the scenes, power workers are fixing lines. Emergency workers are helping in Dunrobin, Quebec, and other parts of Ottawa. Volunteers are caring for members of the community. Even store keepers are selling badly needed goods to their customers. There are countless acts of service throughout the city. "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all."

Order is disrupted, but tranquility remains; a sense of peace; a sense of trust. "And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace." It doesn't have to be that way. "Where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind." A blackout brings chaos, which can lead to envy,

Wis 2:12, 17-20
Ps 54
Jas 3:16-4:3
Mk 9:30-37

theft and violence. There were some signs of it: people not following the four-way stop rules at intersections; instead following close behind the car ahead of them, sneaking through without waiting their turn. But the silence, the darkness, little sacrifices: the power failure is like a little retreat. Maybe it brought us below the veneer of the secular culture, closer to our roots, closer to Jesus. His life and death were service to all: "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." He took on the form of our fallen humanity to share our death. But through his sacrifice, by the work of the Holy Spirit, we share in his life.

It requires humility on our part; grace that counters the pride and envy within, humility to serve and be served. "He took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.'" When we receive service, we're like that child: helpless, needy and trusting. "But surely, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of my life." When we serve others, we're following Jesus. "With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you; I will give thanks to your name, for it is good." For this Eucharist, we pray for the humility to serve and be served.