

FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

You may remember in my homily last weekend as I spoke about how we sometimes hear (or say) that Mass is boring. I encouraged you to get a Mass Journal (either on your own or one that we offered). The purpose of the Mass Journal is: first, a reminder to yourself to ask God to speak to you in the Mass; and second, to write down **one thing** that moved you in the Mass that would help you to better yourself throughout the week.

This is important; this is God speaking to us, to *you*! Many times we don't even recognize God's voice speaking to us. Someone said to me after Mass, "Fr. Von, God doesn't speak to me the way He speaks to you." After reflecting on this, I came to realize the proper response would have been to say, "Of course not. He speaks to you the way He speaks to you, not me." He touches each of us in a different way. He doesn't always use *words* when He speaks to our hearts. When we open ourselves though to something that will make us a "better-version-of-ourselves," we will hear something.

Listen to the **hymns** we sing at Mass. It may be one we've sung countless times before, like "Here I Am, Lord," and yet, with the current circumstances of your life, you hear a word or a phrase (that you've sung before *ad nauseam*) that may pierce your heart! Listen to the **prayers** of the Mass. You may find yourself brought in by something you never paid attention to before. There may be a moment of **silence** in the Mass where inspiration hits you. It may be in the **readings** or the **homily** that something strikes you. I remember in my first parish during one of my homilies I told a dumb joke (I know, I know, you're saying, "That is so atypical of Father Von to tell a dumb joke!"). It was there to make a point, but was not the focus – a throw-away line, if you will. Well, six months later, a man came up to me and reminded me of the joke and how it really got him thinking about the direction of his life, and how he needed to change. God used *even* a dumb joke in order to speak to someone's heart!

We sometimes expect God to speak to us in extraordinary ways. Most often, though, He speaks to us in the ordinary, every-day humdrum of our life. If we only expect to hear God in extraordinary ways, we may miss His whisper – a whisper that sounds an awful lot like ourselves – speaking a word from our conscience. The purpose of the Mass Journal is to help draw our attention back to listening for His voice, and to capture what He says so we don't forget it.

I encourage you to open the Mass Journal each day of the week to remind yourself about this conversation you had with God on Sunday.

Doing this will change our lives. Doing this will change our lives for the BETTER!

So... did you do it? Did you grab that Mass Journal? It sounded like a good idea last week, but did you act on it? This is just a friendly reminder to get a Mass Journal. ☺ It's not too late. God *will* speak to you in the Mass. When we listen attentively for His voice, the Mass no longer is boring, but filled with grace and life! It doesn't matter how old or young you are: God wants to speak to each of us, personally! His words are *life*. He knows the circumstances of your life, of the week you had... of the week you are *about* to have, and He knows what you need to get through it. In fact, not just to get through it, but to *flourish* in it!