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25 February 2024 + Second Sunday of Lent

Last Sunday, after the 10:30am Mass in Boyd, a parishioner came up to me and commented on how many families with babies and young children were at Mass. I said that we have seen this at the other two Masses as well. It really is wonderful to see this happen. I think this is a wonderful sign of generations beginning to realize the importance of a faith community, especially in a growing secular world that offers so little in terms of faith and spirituality.

I remember talking with a young couple a while ago who returned to Sunday Mass after being away for a time. The reason they stopped going was that their little baby was extremely fussy at one Mass and was very "vocal." They felt they were too disruptive and out of place, so they decided to stop coming to Mass. It is so important that we never make young families feel unwanted, and that we rejoice that they are here with their children.

Something I need to mention again, as I wrote about several years ago. The only difficulty with fussy children is during the homily, when we end up competing with each other for listeners. Outside of the homily, the whole purpose of the Mass is to give praise, thanksgiving, and glory to God through our worship. Even the children do so in their own way. Each of our churches has a cry room. The purpose of the room is not to live there. Children need to learn how to participate as best they can at Mass. Parents can do a lot to explain to their children why they come to church, what the Mass is, and how we set aside a short time during our week to give praise to God and spend time with Jesus.

The cry room is meant to be a place where parents can go when a child is unusually disruptive. While St. Rose of Lima and Holy Family churches have a cry room separated from the main body of the church, we specifically created a space within St. Joseph church so that parents would have a place to go. Because of the acoustics in the church, the cry room was built to significantly reduce the volume and echo. If the lights are off in the room the darkened windows provide privacy, even if a mother needs to nurse a child in privacy. There are no doors so that someone with a child doesn't have to open and close them. There are chairs to sit, or to just stand and rock the baby. I always suggest the parents with babies sit nearer to the cry room so that they can easily use this space without much movement. While it may sound loud in the room itself, the room greatly reduces the echo in the church. I don't see many using the room. I think it is because parents don't understand why it is there. Try it! Please know that the reason we have spaces in each of our churches, is because we are thinking of you and want you to be here.

I want to thank all of those who came to our special meeting on Thursday regarding our building projects. I will share the results as we move forward with our decisions and plans.

Blessings and best wishes,