



Things to Ponder

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25th Sunday in Ordinary Time & The Pope's Visit

Dear Parish Family,

Few events have brought more attention to the Catholic Church in this country than the expected arrival in the United States of His Holiness, Pope Francis, on Tuesday, September 22. Believers and non-believers alike have been speculating on what message the pope should or will bring to us.

Two themes seem consistent in the words we have already heard pour forth from him: (1) Ours is a God of mercy; and (2) Be open to the Holy Spirit. Both admonitions require interior conversion and a willingness to take action. Pope Francis is steeped in the tradition of the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*. His daily *examen* likely reveals to him the constant interplay of the divine and the demonic. Knowledge of his own need for mercy empowers the pope to recognize that need in others. Good decisions are not made without prayer and a process of discernment that requires consultation. In other words, the pope is a good listener.

I suspect that the message the pope will bring is none other than that of Jesus which we hear in today's Gospel (Mark 9:30-37). Knowing the rivalry among his disciples as to who was the greatest among them, Jesus presented them with the image of a child. The innocence and openness of a little child is the example for anyone who wants to experience the awesome love of God!

Sincerely in Our Lord,

Rev. Bill Foley

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