

FR. BRAD HAGELIN

PASTOR

My dear Kirkland Catholics,

To preface, the plan is for pastor's columns to come out *every other* week, on the weekend that I am at the other parish in our parish family, so I have a touchpoint every week with you either by letter or in person. So that should explain why you should not expect a note from me every week; when you see me in person I am **not** *writing a letter* – which is how Saint Paul also “rolled:” see Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Philippians where he explicitly says he is writing *because* he is **not** able to see them in person right now and longs to come see them in person as soon as possible.

My musings for this week are as follows: I recently got back from leading a weeklong retreat (Monday through Saturday) in Alaska with Fr. Chad Green. He replaced me at Saint Luke, and we mutually discerned for me to attend one final Senior High Youth retreat with him to kind of “hand off” this special retreat. We were in the remote Alaska wilderness close to Denali National Park with about 10 adult leaders and 20 youth. Here are some takeaways that I think we can each apply to our own life.

- **Effectiveness of sustained intercessory prayer:** we had at least a single dedicated individual (non-family member) praying daily and offering sacrifices for each youth and adult participant for at least a week before the trip and throughout the retreat.
- **Letting God have the initiative:** the leadership discerned in advance not to over-plan. And so, every day we went to prayer and asked the Lord what He wanted us to do and we then followed what the Lord seemed to indicate. It was VERY fruitful. Sometimes we were surprised by what it seemed we were to do or not do. Case in point the next lesson.
- **Power of a good confession:** having two priests present all throughout four full days meant ample opportunity for youth and adults to go to confession. Previous to the retreat we discerned that the first full day we were being asked to really press into how to make a good confession, and how to make a *remedial* confession if needed (confessing serious sins previously omitted in confession). I remember preparing the handout and talk and saying “this seems too intense for a highschooler” and really not being sure we discerned correctly; but I can say the response of the teens and the fruits of this on the retreat were absolutely undeniable.
- **Trusting in both the Presence of Power of the Holy Spirit:** we led the group through several imaginative prayer experiences where they asked the Holy Spirit to “show them” or “reveal to them” aspects of the Lord’s love for them personally, and the Lord showed up. We also offered prayer ministry the final night and I think every single youth made use of this with no pressure from the leadership (that **everyone** went is definitely a first on this retreat) and there was a lot of inner healing and physical healing (prayer ministry and prayer for physical healing is a charism of Saint Luke, for like 30+ years, probably because St. Luke was a physician!) that occurred.
- **Daily Mass:** We had Mass every day in Alaska and that really set the tone and was the real source for a lot of the “breakthrough” these teens may have had, even when these breakthroughs didn’t happen at Mass *per se*. The final day, our flights were on the hour: 7, 8, 9, 10am on small DHC-2 Beavers to get us to the bus to take us to Fairbanks to fly back to Seattle. So Fr. Chad and I had to do Mass at 6:00am because I was on the 7am flight out. The previous night at bedtime, we mentioned this Mass but made clear no youth were expected to come, and I assumed most if not all of them would sleep in as long as possible depending on flight time. Well I was astonished that two-thirds of these highschoolers showed up for Mass at 6am (after being up at least until midnight the previous evening).

In regard to the last bullet point, most folks are not able to go to mass daily, because of work and school schedules, but even once a week getting to – say – the 6:30pm Mass on Wednesday at Holy Family, or a Saturday morning Mass at a neighboring parish may be an option for working people.

I leave all of these other observations about the retreat for us to apply to our own lives as it seems right. Consistency in prayer, the power of the Sacraments approached worthily & intentionally, and relying on the Lord’s power and guidance all seem like guideposts that every Catholic ought to follow and take to heart. The youth on this retreat took it to heart and I was thankful to the Lord and very proud of them.

With love in Christ,
Fr. Brad