

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time A

July 9th, 2017

It is a blessing for the Diocese of Cleveland to have its own seminary. We have many young, holy guys studying there. I myself just graduated from St. Mary's Seminary in May and I can tell you how much the diocese is blessed by the young men who are answering God's calling.

I guess you already heard many good things about these seminarians, but today, I am going to talk their human side that most people don't see, or at least see as much as I did.

When I was a seminarian, we used to complain a lot. We complained about almost everything related to the seminary; the classes, the homework, our rooms, some of the meals, even the coffee... Seminary coffee was actually pretty bad though.

Last year, I was sitting in the lounge (at the seminary) with some other brother seminarians complaining about the amount of reading we had to do for some of our classes. While we were talking, I was checking my

Facebook as well, and it was on Facebook that I came across a picture of a dying nun. When I saw it, I could not say anything for a couple seconds. The picture was of Sr. Cecilia Maria, an Argentinian Carmelite sister. In the picture, she was smiling and serene despite the fact she was dying from a devastating battle with cancer. Some of you have probably seen this picture too. For those who didn't see it, Sr. Cecilia Maria died last year at the age of 43. For the last six months of her life, she was diagnosed with cancer of the tongue and the disease metastasized into her lungs. A month before her death, Sr. Cecilia Maria wrote;

“I am very content. I am astonished by the work of God through suffering, and by so many people who pray for me.”

In the final weeks of her illness, her condition worsened and she had to be hospitalized. From her bed, she never stopped praying and offering up her sufferings with the certainty that her encounter with God was near.

She wrote her last wish on a piece of paper: “I was thinking about how I would like my funeral to be. First, some intense prayer and then a great celebration for everyone. Don't forget to pray but don't forget to celebrate either!”

Our life can certainly become burdensome at times. We all know this is true. We even sometimes feel that following Jesus Christ does not make our lives any better. The followers of Christ experience frustration, trials, and sufferings just like other people. We suffer from illness, abuse, broken relationship, betrayal, sorrow, injuries, disappointment, crime and death. Many Catholics and non-Catholics alike ask themselves at one point or another in their lives: "What does Jesus actually do in our lives?"

In today's gospel, Jesus said;

"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest."

Jesus does not promise us that we will be immune to suffering and burdens. Jesus simply offers Himself to us. He offers us rest in his presence. Those of us who follow Jesus know the One to whom we can always turn, Jesus Christ. Our Lord Himself took humanity and bore burdens of temptation, betrayal, suffering and death. But in communion with our Lord, our burdens become lighter and more bearable. Furthermore, we can experience the work of God through our burdens.

My brothers and sisters, Jesus invites us to come to him. Therefore, as we continue to celebrate this Eucharistic liturgy, may we bring all our

burdens and suffering to Jesus Christ who comes to us in the Holy Communion.