

Fr. Robert's Great Adventure - Part Two

Hello everyone,

As my sabbatical comes to an end, I just thought I would share a couple of thoughts I've gleaned over these last few months. My time in Assisi and Rome was like a walk down "memory lane." Being in Assisi was like walking in the footsteps of St. Francis. Being in Rome, the heart of the Church, reminded me where I came from and how I'm called to share my life. The sight of Pope Francis doing everything he could to share his life with so many people in the crowds day in and day out was both moving and challenging. They were beautiful days to be sure.

London was really the great adventure of my trip. I'd never been there before and there were tons of things to see and do. Our friary was right in the middle of the city. It was easy to walk to so many places such as Buckingham Palace, St. Paul's Cathedral, Kensington Gardens etc. In London I got to be friends with a group of poor people who would have a beer or 10 every afternoon in a park right near the friary. One day, when I was praying the Rosary there, they adopted me and called me "American Bob." Being a part of that little group was an experience I'll never forget. As they sat on the grass, they talked about their lives and their families and their struggles. They fought about who was going to buy the next round. They laughed, and once I was very moved as they mourned the loss of a member of their group. God reminded me in that park that the poor or the drunks we see on our streets are people just like us. After my time with the "drunks in Waterloo," as they called themselves, I hope I will be less afraid and more inclined to reach out to the poor who sit in our parks with the beer cans shrouded with a paper bag.

When I returned to the States, I was able to reconnect with many people dear to me - my family, the friars at our Chapter, several friends and graduates from Catholic University - all of these encounters reaffirmed my conviction that friendships are too precious a gift to let drift away. I only wish I had had the time to visit with more of the people with whom I have been able to share my life. Maintaining relationships is really a challenge for a friar. When you get transferred every 8 years, it's so hard to keep in touch with the people you've gotten close to. As I journeyed from place to place, I realized that keeping in contact is something at which I have to do a better job. In this vein, I was lucky enough to stay with Fr. Martin in Shamokin, PA. Several times he asked me to give his regards to everyone in Kensington. He is doing a fine job at Mother Cabrini Church and is very happy.

The sabbatical gave me some good quiet time - time to think and time to pray. Parish life is busy. St. Paul Church is a very big place. Some of the friars affectionately call it "the factory." There is always a meeting to go to, a sick person to visit and anoint, a husband and wife who are fighting, a Mom and Dad who are exasperated with their kids or kids who are exasperated with their parents. Usually in the morning I worry about the administration of the parish, in the afternoon, a visit to the school or the sick. In the evening, I meet with people who are home from work and need to talk or prepare for their marriage. Speaking of being busy, even though I checked my email now and then while on sabbatical, I just opened my email inbox and found that I have 1311 emails to sort through. Many of them are very old. It is going to take me awhile to go through them. If you sent me an

important email and did not get an answer, please resend it because it's probably buried in the avalanche.

Now that I am home, I hope that I will be able to do a better job of carving out a little quiet time in my daily routine. One of our parishioners forwarded me an email they received questioning my sabbatical. To be honest, I kind of wish that they hadn't. The email they received read something like this. "Why should he get a sabbatical? Who of us could ever get 4 months off?" I guess it is a fair question, even though the tone was a little iffy. Before I went away I asked myself same question. I didn't really understand why I needed a sabbatical and why my Provincial was so insistent on me taking one. I've come to see these last few months as a kind of rest stop on a very long highway. Being realistic, I know that there is no way I am going to retire at, 60, 65, 70, or if I'll even be able to retire at 75 or 80 if my health holds out. With the diminishing number of priests, who really knows if I'll ever retire. Many of us are resigned to the fact that we will simply work until we drop. The fact that I found myself sleeping so many hours, when I didn't have to set the alarm clock, was a sign I was indeed tired and needed a rest. Now that I've taken this time, even I think it was a good idea, and I am most grateful to everyone who made it possible, especially the friars of our parish who chipped in and did my share so that I could be away.

I'm very happy to be home, to sleep in my own bed and get back into my routine. It will be great to put away the suit cases and not have to worry that I left something behind in some friary or Motel. They tell me the KGS building will be coming down next week. I can't wait to see the difference that will make for our parish and our neighborhood.

See you in Church everyone. I can't wait.

Fr. Robert



Archdiocese of Hartford
Office of Safe Environment
134 Farmington Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105

HOW TO REPORT AN INCIDENT OF SEXUAL ABUSE TO THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD

If you have knowledge or suspect that a minor or vulnerable adult (an adult with an intellectual disability) has been sexually abused, in any manner, by personnel of the Archdiocese of Hartford, you are urged to report this information to:

Sister Dolores Lahr, CSJ
Victim Assistance Coordinator
860-541-6475
sr.lahr@aohct.org

In addition, you will be asked to follow up in writing with a detailed description of the facts involved in the incident. Specifics of this written report can be found in the [Policies and Procedures of the Archdiocese of Hartford Relating to Allegations of Sexual Misconduct Involving Minors and Vulnerable Adults](#). This document is also available online at www.archdioceseofhartford.org. The Archdiocese of Hartford will report any and all incidents to the proper civil authorities.

Mandated reporters in the State of Connecticut are required by law to report any incident of sexual abuse involving a minor or vulnerable adult. We encourage any Non-Mandated persons to report such incidents to the proper authorities as well. We support your right to do so.

Incidents involving sexual abuse of minors (persons under the age of 18) should be reported to:
State Department of Children and Families Careline
1-800-842-2288

Incidents involving sexual abuse of vulnerable adults aged 18 – 59 should be reported to the:
Abuse Investigations Division of the Office of Protection and Advocacy
for Persons with Disabilities
1-800-842-7303


Incidents involving sexual abuse of vulnerable adults aged 60 and over should be reported to:
Department of Social Services for the Elderly
1-888-385-4225

Once a written report of an incident of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult has been received, an investigation will be undertaken by, or on behalf of, the Archdiocese of Hartford.

ALTAR SERVERS FAMILY PICNIC

Sunday, June 29th

1:30pm at Sage Park



**All Altar Servers
and
their families are
invited to our annual
picnic. Please let us
know how many will
attend from your
family!**

Email Fr. Peter at:

frpeter@stpaulkensington.org

The Statue of Liberty is shown in profile, holding a torch aloft in her right hand and a tablet in her left. The background is a stylized American flag with stars and stripes. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

FORTNIGHT FOR FREEDOM

June 21–July 4

Prayer for the Protection of Religious Liberty

O God our Creator,
from your provident hand we have received
our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
You have called us as your people and given us
the right and the duty to worship you, the only true God,
and your Son, Jesus Christ.

Through the power and working of your Holy Spirit,
you call us to live out our faith in the midst of the world,
bringing the light and the saving truth of the Gospel
to every corner of society.

We ask you to bless us
in our vigilance for the gift of religious liberty.
Give us the strength of mind and heart
to readily defend our freedoms when they are threatened;
give us courage in making our voices heard
on behalf of the rights of your Church
and the freedom of conscience of all people of faith.

Grant, we pray, O heavenly Father,
a clear and united voice to all your sons and daughters
gathered in your Church
in this decisive hour in the history of our nation,
so that, with every trial withstood
and every danger overcome—
for the sake of our children, our grandchildren,
and all who come after us—
this great land will always be "one nation, under God,
indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.