

Sermon

I guess most of you all know that I'm a Sophomore in Knox Catholic High School. We just started school, and, every year there is always someone new. Last year the class of 2013 was the freshmen class. Now it's the class of 2014, and seeing how this year's freshmen are, it makes me wonder if my freshmen class was like that. They all seem lost and confused, and they were overexcited at the recent football game between KCHS and Rhea County. Some freshmen were even putting acrylic paint in their hair. I saw this freshman last Friday, a week after the first football game, and he still has green paint in his hair. But freshmen eventually become seniors, and - every year -last year's seniors go from the top to the bottom. They start college, where they reclaim the freshmen title. After they graduate they become the new people at work, where again they find themselves at the bottom. It is a constant cycle.

In the Gospel Jesus was talking about how it would be embarrassing to sit in the top seat and be asked to move seats to a

lower seat. So that would be a like senior becoming a freshman, and being taken down from the top to the bottom. Instead we should start at the bottom, and when the host asks us to move higher up, it makes us feel important and special. I would assume that's what it feels like to be a senior. Being a sophomore feels much better than being a freshman so being a senior must make you feel pretty good.

In the reading today from Hebrews, we are instructed not to neglect hospitality to strangers. This means that we need to help people who might need help. At KCHS we have freshmen orientation, where we welcome new students and help them be a little less lost. We also have to earn service hours. Some are indirect - things like donating food or helping with a fundraiser. Then we have direct service where we have to be face to face with people who need help, people who might be homeless or in need. Last year, for example, I worked at Coats for the Cold, where I helped find coats for people who needed them, including a lot of children. Another way I have provided service is through the youth

group here. We ran this year's Vacation Bible School, an action of direct service to the church and the community. We, the congregation at St. Thomas, are very familiar with service. We show hospitality through many of our outreach programs such as FISH, the Interfaith Hospitality Network, and discretionary Sundays. And all of us show hospitality every Sunday, but we might not know it. In the Prayers of the People we pray for the sick, the poor, those in prison, and everyone who needs the prayer. This is showing them hospitality because we are asking God to help them. When we do this it shows that we care about these people.

In the first reading Jeremiah is telling us that people abandoned God. They left him because things weren't going their way. That must have been devastating to God, and then they tried to do stuff their own way. "They have forsaken the fountain of living water, they dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water." We need God. God has what we need. We can't go out and get it from Wal-mart or make it ourselves. God

has the key to Eternal life. We can't make it ourselves, The people in the first reading tried to things their way, failed, and they suffered with no water. We can't make eternal life; and, if we somehow managed to do that, it would be wrong. There would be one missing element, just like in Superman III where Lex Luthor tries to build his own kryptonite, and he is missing one ingredient that can only be found on Krypton. Some ingredients can only be found with God. Through God's hospitality, though, we have the resources and guidance we all need to find eternal life.

So in God's eyes we are all clueless freshman. We are all wandering around the halls completely lost and all needing his help so we can get to where we are supposed to be. With God's guidance, he helps us find our classes, our lunch, and our place in this world. Through his mercy, he gives us people in this world to help us - our families, minister, teachers, and friends. Through the Bible, he gives our own orientation guide, to help us get around. I'm not sure what he can do about the green paint, though. Amen.