

Obedience and the Apostolic Life

August 12, 2018

Fr. Joshua Houck will be going on his next assignment soon and he will be missed here at Regina Caeli Parish. Fr. Houck and I are members of a Society of Apostolic Life that has for its object the sanctification of priests through the exercise of the priesthood, particularly the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in its Traditional form. Part of this sanctification is obedience to the Superiors, and so when we are asked to go to another assignment, the priest's good is to obey and, as a result, it is also the best thing for the faithful. It is difficult for the faithful to understand why priests have to move, but if you understand that it is part of being a member of a Society of Apostolic Life, then it is perhaps easier to see that there is a good beyond the particular apostolate that requires the change of assignment for the priests.

The Fraternity Superiors have many factors to take into consideration when making these decisions but whatever their final decision is, it is our duty as priests to obey. This is what we promised so solemnly on the day of our ordination when the ordaining bishop looked us in the eye, held our hands firmly and asked us if we would be obedient. Obedience is a virtue we all have to learn and put into practice, one which likens us to our Lord Who taught us so profoundly with His dying on the Cross out of obedience to the Father (cf. Phil 2:8). It is also the virtue that unites us all together so profoundly by uniting our wills in the doing of God's Holy Will.

The needs of the faithful are taken into consideration in these decisions, and in this case, though Fr. Houck will be going to El Paso, another young priest will be taking his place here in Houston to carry on the important work that Fr. Houck has been doing. I would like to wish Fr. Houck all the best for his next assignment and assure him of my prayers, and I would like all of you to also keep him in your prayers as he continues his journey in following our Lord. Please give Fr. John Kodet a warm welcome upon his arrival. May God love you all.

Rev. Charles Van Vliet, FSSP
Pastor, Regina Caeli Parish