

Grease, Sweat, Mud, Grime *Glory*

No matter the outcome or the amount of the net proceeds from the 34th annual Lakeside Family Festival, there is so much for which to be thankful in the continued support for the massive undertaking which is this festival. By the end of the weekend, most of us are ripe with some combination of sweat, grease, mud, dust and bug spray. This, otherwise undesirable, odor is the scent of victory. It is the victory of sacrificial giving, patience, community pride and charity.

Notwithstanding some of the lyrics of the hideous music which blares from that brain-cell killing machine known as the “Freak Out;” this event is a wholesome and good event in which we facilitate genuine joy and family time for our community.

Living in an age wherein electronic, virtual reality seems to absorb most of people’s time and attention, the simplicity of the purely “mechanical” seems rather quaint by comparison. The mostly 19th century technology which dominates the festival does, I think, interrupt the perpetual, catatonic trance on our electronic screens. And, while I prefer the beauty of nature to the cacophony of a carnival, the machines of the carnival put us in touch with physical forces, mediated through gears, motors and flashing lights; these are forces which are also part of the creation of the Good God we worship and praise.

It may be a “fool’s errand” to try to turn a carnival festival into an object for contemplation, awe and wonder, but I think we need to access it wherever we can get it. God has made of us “co-creators!” He has given us the ability to make machines from the rocks of the earth and the power of fire and the atom. The machines give us access to more of the reality in which we live. And that there is ‘more than meets the eye’ is central to the spiritual quest which, at bottom, is what life is all about. The famous words of St. Irenaus come to mind:

Life in man is the glory of God; the life of man is the vision of God. If the revelation of God through creation gives life to all who live upon the earth, much more does the manifestation of the Father through the Word give life to those who see God.

As I am always wont to say about this life, the goods of this world, properly apprehended, point beyond themselves to the Greatest Good.

We all owe a great debt of gratitude to the parishioners and community members who sacrificed this first holiday weekend of the “Summer Season” to work the booths and the many functions which are required to make the festival work. In particular, I am most appreciative of the great work done by this year’s chairman, **Jamie Schell**. Jamie brought to the ‘table’ a great congeniality, magnanimity and humility which was positively motivating and helpful.

Of course, the work of the festival is much more than one person: Jamie had the able assistance of his dad, Jim and the backing of a group of very committed Steering Committee Members, Booth Chairpersons and the cohorts of volunteers in the “trenches.” Thanks to all of them and all of the support staff behind them for the contributions big and small: I speak of advertising, the gathering of sponsors, the creation of booklets, phone calls, solicitations and too much more to list.

I must give special emphasis to all of those Saturday morning workers who labored to empty the trailers, erect the booths, and to do all of the tasks necessary for setting up the “field.” In less than ideal conditions, this group of dedicated folks came week-after-week, not only to construct but, in many ways, to improve the food and game booths.



As I said last weekend, in the context of announcing the Capital Campaign for Neumann Hall and associated projects, this festival will remain a crucial fundraiser for our parish for the foreseeable future. Let us remain committed to it as we are to our faith family and let us give thanks for the ability and the willingness to pull-off so great a feat!