

OF TWO THINGS

Priesthood Sunday is being observed in the United States this October 30. This is an initiative of the USA Council of Serra International in Chicago. Serra is a lay group that promotes vocations to the priesthood and religious life. We have several councils of Serra within our Diocesan Church.

The intent of a Priesthood Sunday is to show support for our priests with prayer, celebration, and dialogue. The past several years have been difficult ones for priests, in light of the negative attention in the media. The priesthood is one of those vocations to which generalizations are ascribed. "If one does it, they must all be doing it!" Attorneys and politicians suffer from the same type of labeling.

We have many more faithful and dedicated priests than we have of those who have misused and abused their position of leadership within the Church. All of our priests have felt the brunt of recent criticism and suspicion, as the result of actions on the part of a small percentage among them. It has not been easy for many of them to continue in effective ministry. Yet, they have done so.

Please express your appreciation to your priests, this weekend and periodically. Priests are human like the people whom they serve. They, too, can use encouragement. They, too, appreciate understanding. They, too, need to know that what they do is important to someone.

Intelligent Design has been in the news for the past several weeks. Eight families in the Dover Area School District are suing to have Intelligent Design removed from the curriculum. It was to be included, along with the study of the theory of evolution. Intelligent Design proponents argue that life on earth was the product of an unidentified intelligent force. They observe that the natural selection of evolution cannot explain fully the origin of life or the emergence of highly complex life forms.

It is amazing to me that scientists would be opposed to a discussion of possibilities that they do not yet understand. Scientists are supposed to be open to such discussions. I have a difficult time understanding why educators would want to limit access to various possibilities relative to an issue as important as is existence. Education is supposed to lead an individual into a search for the truth. Why are intelligent people afraid of an Intelligent Force in our universe?

As far as I can figure out, there are only two possible options relative to how our world and we came to be. Either it all happened by chance or there is some sort of a design. Design requires an intelligence. We know that there is order in the universe. We also know from experience that order does not come about by chance. Even evolution's natural selection presupposes certain laws in nature. Such laws do not come about haphazardly.

Saint Thomas Aquinas put it this way: Nothing happens without something else causing it. However, that process has to begin somewhere. There has to be a cause that has no cause, otherwise nothing would be existing today. We call that first cause a God.

Evolution and Intelligent Design are not mutually exclusive. Acceptance of the two as one reality would answer many unanswered questions. It would also call for a moral accountability that is so badly needed in our society.