

Dispensing

I watched the construction of our new 24/7 Adoration Chapel and Catholic Life Center during the past few months. I photographed the various stage of construction for historical purposes.

One evening I walked into the yet-to-be-finished ladies bathroom. I checked out the huge mirror that would be an added attraction for the ladies. The handicapped hand bars were installed near the yet to be installed toilets. Of course, the paper towel dispensers as well as the toilet paper dispensers were installed. Then I noticed the extra dispenser that both surprised and amused me. It had two turn knobs at each bottom end and two places to drop a 25 cent coin depending on your kind of purchase

I proceeded to the men's bathroom to check out what had been installed there. As yet, there was no mirror, just a paper towel dispenser as well as a toilet tissue dispenser. I didn't notice any "extra" installed items.

Now, I was in a bit of a quandary. Should I ask some experts about this dispenser, and, if it was needed in the ladies toilet? Then I had a moment of inspiration and a plan.

The next morning, I decided to take my "surprise" to the office staff for enlightenment. I told them that I had discovered an interesting metal type dispenser in the almost-complete ladies bathroom in our new Catholic Life Center. I assured them that my discovery was much bigger than a toilet paper dispenser. My plea for enlightenment and understanding was met with laughter. They knew. As someone who usually buys bulk items, needed for our parish, at Sam's, I wondered if I would be comfortable buying items for our newly discovered dispenser. Obviously, I wouldn't feel comfortable buying such items while wearing my clerical attire.

We never cease to learn. In an age of ongoing education and lifelong learning, our expectations are often stretched by surprising discoveries.

Our faith journey is a journey of discovery. We experience our own unexpected detours that lead us through some lean and questioning periods to a greater awareness of how God is at work in our lives.

Faith's journey always has the element of surprise. Surprise dashes our previous certainty, leading us to greater uncertainty and more trust in the God who leads us. In order to handle such a surprise, we must be at home with it and approach it with a sense of humor.

When something funny, wonderful or unexpected happens to us to make us laugh at ourselves and take ourselves less seriously; surely it is an indication of God's playfulness

Sometimes, we put ourselves through all kinds of mental torture in an attempt to be serious when levity is asked for. At such times, maybe God is saying to us, "You are taking yourself too seriously." As comedian Bill Cosby once said, "There is hope for the future because God has a sense of humor and we are all funny to God."

It is amazing that the average child laughs about 400 times per day; while the average adult laughs only 15 times a day. When we transition from childhood to adulthood, we lose our sense of playfulness. Centuries ago, Horace said that we need to mix a little foolishness with prudence in order to be playful at the right moment.

My logic begins to kick in and I ask myself: seeing that we do not have such a dispenser in any other building on our parish properties, should I ask the contractor to take out this one? Then I remembered that, following Hurricane Katrina, someone sent us a large box of items that might fit in such a dispenser. I discovered it stored in a mop closet while I was doing some detective work. Eventually, I threw out the box and its contents. Now, as I reflect back, I conclude that the person who sent the box initially, obviously saw a need for it.

So I have decided that the new dispenser should stay but I know that when it comes to stocking and restocking the said dispenser, I will defer the privilege to persons who are more competent to make such a purchase.