

A True Story on The Lighter Side

Years ago, when President Obama was in office, he and his wife Michelle were going to visit Pope Benedict at the Vatican. It is the custom when a national leader visits another head of state to present a gift. The White House contacted a well-known Catholic named Louis who had done work for many churches, Bishops and even papal visits. They asked him what would be a good gift to give the Holy Father on behalf of the United States. Louis lived in Philadelphia and had a strong devotion to St. John Neumann whose relics are at St. Peter's in Philadelphia. Louis thought if St. Peter's could donate one of the vestments (a stole) that Bishop Neumann had worn, and place it in a very nice frame, that this would be a very appropriate gift for the President to give to the Popo. St. John Neumann was an immigrant to the United States and a naturalized citizen, who worked tirelessly for the immigrants pouring into America. St. Peter's provincial happily agreed with the donation. All went well and the office of the White House was pleased and Pope Benedict appreciated the gift.

A couple of months later, Father Alfred, who had worked on this project, received a letter from the State Department asking what the cost of the donation was since by law they had to repay the church. Alfred informed them that by law, the church could only donate such a relic and not sell it. The State Department continued to insist, so finally the church said they would accept a small donation for a charity. This is probably the only time in history that the Catholic Church refused a donation.

Our pastor never does talk about money, however when the pandemic started in March, as Deacon Peter mentioned

Wednesday, donations have been down 15 to 20 %. We have a wonderful parish and our parish will be happy to accept a Christmas donation.