

Who are these *they* anyway?

Have you ever been in a conversation with someone, or even with a group of people, and when someone is trying to make a point they often use a source to help make their statement more meaningful and true? Maybe in an effort to convince you or sway your opinion?

It seems that it is very common to hear in a conversation, something to the effect of “that’s what *they* say.... You know, they say that eggs are bad for you, that they say you should walk 5,000 steps per day, that they say you should eat only protein, that you should eat only carbs, that you should not swim 1 hour after you eat... Or, *they* will pick up, *they* will put everything away, *they* will pay for it.

There seem to be no limit to what these so called experts, the *they* claim. Some of these statements are very true, some are somewhat true, and some not so much. Most, for better or for worse, have an element of truth in them. This element of truth can either confuse us, make us cynical and distrustful, or even challenge our opinions, or in our case, challenge our faith. The truth can be very evasive, as I am sure that most of you are aware.

Take in point the following statement that I recently heard, from one of Trustees. She thought the Diocese paid for the priest salary at each church and it was a new understanding for her that we pay for their salaries. I can understand how this idea might have been perpetuated. Someone had at least given them the idea that *they* take care of this. That *they* appoint them and therefore that *they* take care of their salaries. Totally forgetting that the Diocese, asks each parish for funds annually through the Bishops Appeal to help support the larger needs of the Diocese, and the amount each parish gives, wouldn’t come close to paying anyone’s salary.

Having a *they* to lean on, can be comforting, but it can also be a false sense of reality. Believing that someone else is taking care of the church, that someone else is doing all the tasks and that someone else will take care of the faith. This is our house, the lawn needs to be mowed, the garbage needs to be taken out, the dishes need to be done, the bills need to be paid. How this gets done is up to us and certainly not *they*.

I like to consider myself as an “In the trenches” Catholic. The church is ours, not theirs. It is us and we, and not they and them. We are responsible for the church and its mission. We have each been called, by God to continue the faith. We each have a calling, regardless of whether we are ordained or not. For me, the very hardest challenge I have ever had, was to be a true follower of Christ. It is much easier for me to be good at my job, to be a good husband, and a good father, than it is to be a good Christian. You mean that I am supposed to love those who I don’t like? That I need to help everyone? Scary stuff. Rest assured that even many Saints across millennial have shared that they too could be overwhelmed by this calling. I take great comfort in the fact that Jesus repeatedly told us, “Do not be afraid, for I am with you.” I would contend, that as believers, we know that there is so much more to life than what we can see. That God is with us every step of the way and you and I by our baptism, are the Church. The task of living out the Gospel is ours. The act of accepting our calling is ours.

In the very near future, I will be asking you - what do you want to do with your calling? How can your faith be put into action? What gifts do you have that could be best utilized for the Gospel?

I see great things happening here! Deacon Steve