



From the Pastor's Desk:

Last evening, I attended a meeting of concerned businesses, representatives from 7/11 corporate offices, residents, village and town officials, the High School and the Suffolk Country Police. The purpose was to discuss recent problems with vandalism, outrageous behavior, and use of foul and abusive language, purchases of alcohol for illegal purposes (under-age drinkers), drugs and assorted activities that are frightening to people and detrimental to the businesses and morale of the Village of Lindenhurst. Everyone appreciated the opportunity to speak in a mature and informative environment created by our village leadership.

Individuals voiced their frustrations, anger (in a calm manner) and offered ideas, recommendations and both immediate and long term solutions. It was a productive meeting which will be followed up by the Village, Town, County and SCPD officials and 7/11 Corp reporting progress on increased surveillance, security guard effectiveness and progress. But the deeper issue involved a discussion about the lives of the youth themselves.

We know that there is a mixture of good and “not so good” teens hanging around at any different time. Their families range from present to rarely present in the lives of their teens... but I truly don't believe that the “rarely present” side of this spectrum is due to lack of love. Rather, I believe much is due to broken lives, lack of values, financial insecurities, absence of a “Spirituality of substance” and the general epidemic of the deteriorating of family and respect for personal life. We must partner with others to teach our teens that “the Law” is meant to protect, and must be respected as a legitimate means of bringing and maintaining peace and happiness by demanding good order and discipline.

I believe that the positive values that youth need to learn about can be taught, not only at home, but in school. Life, family and community values are universal standards that touch the heart of all people no matter their gender, race, ethnic background or religious affiliation. What is valued by Catholics is valued by all God-fearing faith groups. Our country is called to base its structures on the principal “...that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

I proposed that we partner as Religious, Business, Civil, Law Enforcement and Education Leaders to develop a “Symposium on Community Living and Values” that we design, develop and present to all students in our Elementary and High Schools at least once each year. We need to teach and challenge our youth how and why they must respect themselves, their family and their community. We need to let them know that we are on their side, that we want the best for them, their families and the community... and we need their help to make this happen.

Now I know that we have great families in our parish with great teenagers. But life in villages and towns across the U.S.A. has gotten out of hand and we need to join with our neighbors to reclaim our village and build up the standard of life and living. I'm going to keep this focus and have offered myself and the parish in support of any positive efforts to reach out to our youth through education, challenge, understanding and forgiveness.

I call upon all OLPH families to sit down and talk to your children about what's going on in the village and in their schools. Talk about behavior and respect. Challenge them to stand up for what is right and to defend the rights of villagers to walk into any store or business uninhibited by “tough-guy and tough-girl” attitudes and behavior. Make sure your teens know not to “hang out” where they should not be loitering and to always be respectful to people young and old. In general, let's be more vigilant and be there for each other when and if a bunch of teens are being disrespectful. And, if it is a “legitimate” infraction of the law please call the police. And if some of you are **retired or off-duty Police Officers, perhaps your experience on the force might be used for the good of the community as you observe and take opportunities to address issues as you deem appropriate and legitimate.**

What is going on may not involve “your teens” but it does involve “your community, your village, and your parish. Let's pray and work together to bring some of our positive, Spiritual attitude to have a hands-on effect in Lindenhurst.

May God +bless you and yours today and forever,

Father Anthony