Notes from Fr. Nick

My many hobbies have sustained me in my priesthood. In addition to my art studio, I have two cats and an aquarium. I love the symphony, and until a few years ago, I rode a motorcycle. But the one hobby that I have consistently pursued since childhood is trains. I’ve been building a model railroad for many years, and I enjoy simply going out and watching trains.

Trains have fascinated me since I was a small boy. They were big, noisy, and going places I could hardly imagine. Also, I was captivated by their complexity. A trip to visit my grandmother, who lived about 150 miles away, required travel on three different trains, yet we never left our seats. Our coach car would be switched from one train to another until we reached our destination. Along the way our train, the Silver Meteor, was transformed from a simple two-car local to a full-fledged streamliner.

My model railroad has long been a work in progress. It may have to wait until my retirement for me to devote the time needed for its completion. At this point, the track is nearly completed, but it will take some time for it to run reliably.

Hobbies serve a greater purpose than providing entertainment. Our minds need time to process our life’s work. After a point, the longer we persist at something, the lower our productivity becomes. All of us have had the experience of losing something, giving up ever finding it, and realizing it was right in front of us when we come back to it later. Redirecting our interests allows time for our brains to “recharge.”

Beyond connecting us with God’s love, Church provides this refocus for many people. It’s a way to put your daily burdens aside, reset your priorities, and enjoy life. This time of year most of us are focused on work, school, or civic pursuits. Take some time this Lent to attend to your hobbies as well. You’ll probably find that you do your work better and find it more satisfying.

“\textit{The New York–Miami Silver Meteor heels to a curve near Sebring, Fla., on March 30, 1970, nearly 3 years after the Seaboard + Atlantic Coast Line merger. At 17 cars, the train was a testament to the enduring strength of the New York–Florida rail travel market.} (\textit{Photo © William Morgan/trains.com})

GIRL SCOUT COOKIE SALE!

Our parish Girl Scout Troop 32694 will be selling Girl Scout Cookies again this weekend... but \textit{only} after the 9:30 am Mass. Please come to the parking lot starting at 10:30 am and pick up your Do-Si-Dos, Samoas, or Tagalongs! (To name a few.) If you can’t make it, you may buy your cookies online and still support our troop! Go to: \texttt{tinyurl.com/32694Cookies}