

## **Traveling Companion: Anyone for golf!**

Fr. Michael Tracey

On rare occasions, when I play golf, I marvel at the number of golfers who have their own cart. They keep it in their carport, close to the golf course. Often, I encounter them meandering along the road either on their way to the golf course or home from the golf course. Many of these carts have their own individuality. They are personalized and decorated; often with college colors or professional football team emblems.

Most days, as I head off to lunch, I encounter an elderly gentleman driving along. He works at a local lumber yard and is on his way home for lunch. He is in no rush and is immune to any traffic hoping to pass him.

During some of my recent and sporadic encounters with golf, I played with some folks who had their own personalized golf carts. Some had compasses to guide the cart, not the golf ball; others had canopies to shield the driver from possible thunderstorms. Some had wing mirrors to protect against any reckless driver who might suddenly appear; others had built in clocks to while away the golfing time. Some had mounted fans to breathe life into a humid body; others had radios to serve as a distraction from a less than satisfactory golf game.

The other day, I rambled outside in the morning heat to support some volunteers who were cleaning up our grounds. In the distance, I saw a couple, armed with rakes, chain saws and gloves, busy cleaning out Our Lady of the Woods Grotto. I stopped to visit with them.

Becky said, "We have something for you!" then, she handed me a key. "Let us show you," Dave joined us as we walked toward a new golf cart. I was speechless when I saw the new cart with my name on it. It even had its own charger, ready to energize it when it got drained of its energy. I was a little kid again. Everyone I met, I had to show them my new toy.

Now, I have to decide what I will do with my new toy. Obviously, I will have to take up golf again in a more serious mood. In the meantime, I will have to ponder how I can best utilize my new toy.

First of all, I may consider parking my car at the house. The present cost of gasoline may encourage me to do so. Then, I can commute the mile distance between my house and the office before 6 a.m. in the morning without competing with traffic. I need not worry about the darkness as the cart also has lights. Also, I would not have to worry about the speed limit.

Secondly, I could drive my cart home for lunch each day and have the secretary and Pastoral Associate ride with me. I'm sure some people might stop and stare at a priest and two ladies, picking their way along the streets of Bay St. Louis. We might even make the headlines in the local newspaper.

Thirdly, I could park it at a golf course and use it when I play golf there. Somehow, I don't feel this might be a good suggestion, because I might begin to have withdrawal symptoms because of its absence from my sight.

Fourthly, I could have it shipped to Ireland and use it during vacation to meander around some of the country roads while I take in the sights and sounds at a leisurely pace.

Fifthly, I could offer rides to the school children around the grounds, hoping that their parents have full insurance coverage.

Finally, I know that I am learning many things from my new golf cart. I don't need cruise control. I don't need a heavy foot. I don't need to worry about speeding tickets. I don't need to ask "are we there yet?" because I know I will get there eventually. I know that my prayers may not be answered on the golf course but I do know that unasked prayers are the best surprises.