

A matter of perspective

I usually check the online version of the SunHerald newspaper every morning to read the headlines and, most especially, to check the obituary column to see if anyone I know died while I was asleep. I also check the WLOX TV app to see the latest stories making news.

But first, I check the Irish newspapers on line to see the overnight happenings. Then it is on to Facebook so see the latest postings.

I haven't a clue how many "friends" I have on Facebook nor am I really worried. Occasionally, I get requests to befriend someone. In most cases, I delete the requests because I haven't a clue who these people are who might want to befriend me.

Of course, getting both the American and Irish perspective on things is interesting. I have found that Facebook postings are saturated with comments about both presidential candidates. And, in most cases, it is a battle as to who might post the most derogatory or venomous comments about the candidates.

Then, I read the Irish stories and perspective on both candidates. I am amazed how different the approach to both candidates is. The Irish media is still puzzled about who the Republican candidate really is. Who is behind that bombastic tone and often cutting sarcasm? Could Americans really elect such a person who seems to have ideas that seem to be off the Richter scale? Would he really do all those, seemingly outlandish things, he proposes? How would the rest of the world react to such a person if he were elected? How come he draws such a huge crowd at his rallies? Does such attraction and fascination say something about people who feel disenfranchised?

It seems little is spoken of the other candidate in Ireland. Maybe, the Irish have been captivated by the charm of her husband. There seems to be no contrast made which might seem to indicate that fear is a more worrisome concern.

Still, one finds different approaches and perspectives from both sides of the pond. Yet, the Irish are glad that their political elections last just a few weeks than, what seems like an ongoing process in the States.

Recently, I became aware of another different perspective. As one who had travelled to and from the States dozens of times, I became immune to the constant shouting and barking of orders and instructions to people going through security screening. I accepted the loudness and impatience as part of the package that was expected at airports. Recently, I encountered a different and more troubling perspective. Some of my family visited Florida recently. They were amazed and shocked by the attitude of security personnel who herded people through the lines, barking out commands, impatient with elderly people who were confused and were asked if they were stupid because they didn't move fast enough. My family felt people were being herded through as if they were a herd of stupid cattle.

A week earlier, I had gone through security at Debovnick airport. As I approached the screening area, there was a large sign indicating what things that could not be carried on and what needed to be screened. I was amazed at the only sounds audible – the rattle of trays being filled and placed on rollers to be passed through the screening. None of the screeners spoke to anyone. They just used a hand gesture to invite people through the metal detectors. Truly, it was a different perspective on security and approach to the traveller.

There can be different perspectives and approaches to parish life as well. People can have different perspectives, approaches and interests as well as reasons for involvement. It is not necessarily a matter of right or wrong but rather perspective. Priests, rather than being cut from the "one size fits all" sacerdotal cloth, each brings his own gifts, fleshed out from a background and experiences that are both unique and original.

There is an old Irish saying that says, "A new broom sweeps clean but an old one is best for the corners." It can be difficult to break in a new broom as well as be open to a new approach, a different perspective. Often, we would rather sit in the corner with our old broom of perspective rather than enjoy the opportunity to enjoy the fresh air offered by a different broom of perspective.

So, I will continue with two feet – one planted in each continent. Maybe, it will continue to give me differing perspectives on life, people, and myself.