

In the summer of 2008, I was given an assignment as a newly ordained deacon, to be “Director of the House of Formation.” Despite the dignity of the title, pretty much I was to keep an eye on five seminarians who were taking classes at SVSU in preparation for possibly going into seminary the following year.

As a former automotive engineer, I often forget how some people ... maybe most people ... I don't know ... are not necessarily very capable with mechanical things. I was surprised very often with the things these men could break. Over that year, I remember them breaking can openers - almost weekly it seemed.

Eventually, while strolling through Linens and Things (as they were going bankrupt) I stumbled on a can opener that said on the packaging: “As used on Skylab missions for NASA.” It wasn't fancy - but it was certainly solid. And as a testament to the right use of our tax dollars - the can opener could stand up to the man-handlings of seminarians.

Today is the memorial of St. Scholastica - the twin sister of St. Benedict. They would meet only one time a year - in deference to their monastic vocations. The last year of her life, Scholastica begged her brother to stay on extra day to visit a little longer.

When he refused, she bowed her head in prayer, and an impassible storm tore through the region - forcing her brother to stay the night.

Prayer is a very powerful thing. God desires to be an intimate part of our lives. Prayer could be thought of as the “can opener of our souls.” Far from being the means of changing God - prayer changes us ... conforming us to the Will of God, and transforming us into the image of Jesus Christ.

Let us pray for that transformation. May prayer be a means of opening our hearts and minds and souls ... so that we might be conduits of God's will and vessels of His mercy.