***What Kind of Car are You***

It was a 1958 Renault Dauphine. Yes, that was my first car. My father tried to caution me about purchasing that car. I didn’t think the rust was that bad, and I thought that the mound of sawdust that I saw was because the car dealer was also a carpenter! I had no idea that sawdust could be put in along with oil. The car was supposed to be economical, and if economy was measured by gasoline, then it was, but it also got twenty miles to a quart of oil. It didn’t start all of the time, and on at least one occasion I shifted into third gear and wound up having a disconnected gear shift in my hand. To understate the facts — it was very high maintenance.

 But I had not learned my lesson. My second car was a 1960 Renault Dauphine with a leaking sun roof and an electric clutch. As you may have noticed that concept never caught on. It was a great learning experience to discover the metric system, and to be able to test my four years of High School French when I read the owner’s manual. Eventually both cars sat in our back yard, and I had the privilege of doing regular parts transfers. Now I had two vehicles that required more repair time and provided less driving time. Eventually a neighbor hauled them both away, which ended a period of my life entitled “The French Disconnection!”

 By God’s grace, I was able to purchase a 1962 Corvair - my first venture into the automatic transmission world, and then a 1965 Chevrolet Corvair Corsa. With the exception of always making certain that I had an extra fan belt - aka “life belt” for these air-cooled engines in the rear, until Ralph Nader had too much time on his hands and decided to write a book, they were dependable in spite of oil spot decorations in the parking lot!

 With maturity (and three children) coupled with an increase in income came a series of very reliable vehicles. With one exception. When a second car was needed a 1970’s Fiat Spyder Convertible made its way into our lives, and in just a matter of months this Italian family member demonstrated why it was called FIAT - “Fix It Again Tony!” Parishioners and local residents called it the “God Rod” and the mechanics called it their Christmas bonus! Eventually an enterprising and mature seminarian assistant assisted me by purchasing it. Arrivederci! Ciao!

 Have you ever considered how people are like automobiles? In some group dynamics I ask people to identify which automobile best describes them.

 There are people who are 3,000-mile service people.  As long as we provide what is necessary for taking care of the car as the owner’s manual, states, they will do what they have promised to do.

 There are people who are “show cars.”  They look really good in the show room, and they get attention at car shows, but in the daily back and forth driving to work — not so much.  Show cars require much more regular care so that everyone can see how shiny they are.

 There are people who have very small trunks.  They offer to help with whatever they can but often their abilities to help are less than their promises.  They have good intentions.

 There are people who are like cars without a back seat.  They really are not interested in much social interaction, so they do not have room to include more than one or possibly two people into their inner circle.

 There are people who are like an Edsel Ford.  They come with great promise and hope, but in the end, they fizzle out.

 There are people who are like a pickup truck.  They really carry the load, and can even carry more if necessary.

 There are people who are like a convertible.  It doesn’t take too much for them to blow their tops off.

 There are people who are like a van.  They are often the life of the party and sometimes they even carry their joys with them.

 There are people who are like Cadillacs: much hype but not able to do more than what any other vehicle can do in terms of getting from point A to point B - just classier.

 There are people who are like white trucks in Texas - they are above the law.

 There are people who are like an electric car - great ideas but nothing happens if they are not plugged into the Power source.

 And we are like all vehicles: if we don’t have our tanks filled from time to time, we should never be surprised when we run out of gas.

***ATTEND THE LITURGIES – INVOKE THE HOLY SPIRIT – STUDY THE BIBLE – PRAISE GOD – REBUKE THE DEVIL***