

## **From the Pastor**

**My Parents** I traveled to Gage County on Monday to visit my parents on our family farm. It was a beautiful day for a drive! I had a couple of stops to make in Beatrice before I headed home to our Blue Springs-addressed farmstead. Mom made dinner (lunch) for Dad and me. I then shared with them pictures and stories and materials from my pilgrimage to Oklahoma City for Father Rother's Beatification Mass. After that, Dad wanted me to see our crops on what we call "Grandpa's" farm, named for my father's maternal grandpa. This farm is a great source of pride for us, as it has been in our family continuously since 1883. None of our corn or soybeans had as yet been harvested at Grandpa's, with a field or two at our home place having been only opened (with the combine). Mom made me an early supper and I headed back to Aurora. The drive was interesting, as storms loomed around the Grand Island area as I drove west of Lincoln. I was happy to arrive home to Aurora, having spent a good day at my "home-home" in Gage County.

**Pro-Life Banquet** Every year, the Nebraska Catholic Conference sponsors a pro-life banquet and workshop. The Catholic Conference is the legislative arm and outreach of our three Bishops in the State. I attended the banquet, but not the workshop. It was held last Friday, September 29, at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln. Seeing all three Nebraska bishops sitting at the same table in the same room was very moving. Archbishop George Lucas, Omaha, headed the delegation, joined by Bishop James Conley of our Diocese and Bishop Joseph Hanefeldt of the Grand Island Diocese. In addition two of the three retired bishops were in attendance: Archbishop Emeritus Elden Curtiss and Bishop William Dendinger. Our keynote speaker for the banquet was Wesely Smith. His expertise in the pro-life culture is working against physician-assisted suicide. He is very scholarly and his talk included passages from prestigious medical journals. Unfortunately, many of medical professionals who write in these journals are in favor of assisted suicide. Wesely Smith told us that he thinks the next few years in the pro-life battle are going to show the major issue to be that of conscience rights for medical workers. He has heard of people whose lives have been ended, deliberately, so that their organs can be harvested. It was a grim topic received by those of us at the banquet, yet it was not without hope. Bishop Conley spoke at the podium as well, and he stressed the beauty of nature turning from the time of fruitfulness to the time of harvest and of colder weather. I think it is with this hope of God's life being abundant at harvest time that we can learn the abundance of God's life in us and that each human life He has created is part of His providential plan. No one of us is accidental; God loves us personally. I learned a lot from the

banquet evening, and I was happy to be able to attend.

**Life Chain** I experienced my first Hamilton County Life Chain on Sunday. From 2:30 till 3:30 p.m., we stood on the south side of Highway 34, a little west of where it intersects with Highway 14. The philosophy of the Life Chain is to pray and stand quietly. We held pro-life signs which indicate our love for all human life. Our purpose was not to engage or interact with the people driving past, but rather to plant seeds for them to think about as they travel. I have participated in over 20 Life Chains. Only once have I had someone approach me personally because they were upset with our mission of loving human life. Even then, I didn't respond to his output of frustration toward our pro-life mission. My practice (I think I learned this from someone else) is that I kneel down on the ground at the Life Chain when the 3:00 hour strikes. This is because we as Catholic Christians want to remember the Hour of Mercy when Our Lord Jesus died upon the cross. The weather was very windy for this year's Life Chain. I have in the past seen posters go flying into the street, but all of our "life-chainers" this year held firm grips upon their signs. The weather sometimes can be very cold or very hot; we were blessed last Sunday with very comfortable temperatures. Did you go to the Life Chain in another city, due to your Sunday plans? I would like to hear about it! I think we are blessed in Aurora with this Life Chain, especially the "staging area" where we gathered and handed out signs. It seemed to me that the driveway was a fitting place to gather at, and begin and end the Life Chain. Plenty of parking was available on the side streets with not too far of a walk to get to Highway 34. Thank you to all who helped sponsor and attend the Hamilton County Life Chain!

**Las Vegas** Did any of you know anyone who was in Las Vegas during the horrific shooting spree last Sunday? In our day of capturing photographs and videos on our phones, seeing the shooting as it unfolded gave me terrified feelings, almost as if I were there Hearing people's testimonies who survived the shooting, it must have had the feel of soldiers engaging in combat. Except that in this surprise attack, the soldiers (i.e. the concert goers) had no ammunition to fire back. All they could do was run or stay low so as to not attract the shooter's deadly aim. Even as the carnage was unfolding, those running and ducking down at first did not that the shooter was 32 stories up in a hotel, firing at nearly 1,000 yards away. As I write this note, I have not heard of any confirmed motive from the shooter to do what he did. While we prayerfully wonder what we can do or how we can help the victims of the Las Vegas shooting, I would direct you to be always sorry for your own sins and to ask God's mercy for the sins of the whole world. I would ask you to hug your children tighter, to trace the Sign of the Cross on their foreheads each

day, and to build up their (and your own) trust in the mercy of Jesus. I would ask all of us to not be so quick to get angry while driving and to be patient when a grocery store line is not moving as quickly as we would hope. I would ask you to hold doors open for people, to wave at people as you walk and drive through their neighborhoods, and to say “please” and “thank you” a little more often. Extra kindness and extra love needs to be shown to others, in alignment with the command of the Lord Jesus to “love one another as I have loved you.” Somehow, the dear Lord always makes good come out of evil. And Jesus heals. Let him heal your mind and heart from the cowardly, sick event which we all witnessed last Sunday in Vegas.

**World Mission Sunday** World Mission Sunday is always observed on the next-to-last Sunday in October. It is observed in *every Catholic parish in the world*. For our preparation of this year’s celebration, I want to share with you the following important information.

**Mission Coop** The Mission Coop preacher, who visited our parishes September 23-24, is a separate and distinct program from World Mission Sunday. The Mission Cooperative that our Diocese of Lincoln participates in is a very good way to support specific missionary dioceses and/or religious orders of priests and sisters who work in missionary lands.

**Canon Law** The Catholic Church is governed by a universal code of law, to which every baptized Catholic is bound to follow in a loving and generous way. You can do an internet search and find the entire body of canons. As with civil law, where we don’t really know each and every law by which we are governed, so it is with the laws of the Catholic Church. I recently discovered that Canon 781 of Church law states: *“Since the whole Church is by its nature missionary and the work of evangelization must be held as a fundamental duty of the people of God, all the Christian faithful, conscious of their responsibility, are to assume their part in missionary work.”* In the same sub-section of the law, we find Canon 791 and its accompanying components: *“To foster missionary cooperation in individual dioceses: 1) missionary vocations are to be promoted; 2) a priest is to be designated to promote effectively endeavors for the missions, especially the Pontifical Missionary Works; 3) an annual day for the missions is to be celebrated; 4) a suitable offering for the missions is to be contributed each year and sent to the Holy See.”*

**Missio.org** This web site, which can be trusted, is found at [www.missio.org](http://www.missio.org). The web site has amazing ways, and trustful, transparent means by which you can fulfill your Christian mandate to promote the mission work of the Church.

**Parish Mass Census** Each year, the Diocese of Lincoln prepares statistical and financial reports to send to the Holy Father in Rome. One of those reports provides the Pope with the number of people attending Holy Mass on the weekends. For the weekends of October 7-8 and October 14-15, people (like ushers or other volunteers) will be counting the attendance at the Masses here in St. Mary’s and St. Joseph’s.

**RCIA (Catholic Study Class)** We had a wonderful group of people attend our first RCIA class this past week. You are welcome to still join us, on Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. I hope to promote the various topics so that a particular class which interests you can be attended, even if you are not planning to come each week. Please keep our class in your prayers!

**Parish Council** Welcome to anyone who wishes to attend our Parish Council meetings, held every second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. The meetings will provide you with a great sense of what is happening in our St. Mary’s parish and give you a greater sense of ownership and investment in our parish community of faith.

**Priest Deanery Day** The priests of our region, called the York Deanery, gathered this past week. We have four such deanery days each year, and this was the first one for us priests who are new to the area. Each deanery I have been a part of has its own unique composition of priests, and I am looking forward to getting to know these priests better.

**Christmas Mass Schedule** Every so often, Christmas falls on a Monday. That is the situation this year. I have wrestled with the importance of observing Christmas as our parishes have customarily scheduled the Mass times versus considering my own capabilities to serve you all as best as I am physically able to. After much prayer and consultation with a number of you, I have decided that the Mass schedule for the weekend prior to Christmas, plus the Christmas Mass schedule, will be as follows (“SM = St. Mary’s; SJ = St. Joseph’s)

Saturday, December 23	5:00 p.m.	SM
Sunday, December 24	8:30 a.m.	SM
	10:30 a.m.	SJ
Christmas Vigil (Dec. 24)	5:00 p.m.	SM
Monday, December 25	8:30 a.m.	SM
	10:30 a.m.	SJ

**Jesus in the Tabernacle** Stopping by the church for meetings and gatherings, is a good and right time to visit our Friend, Jesus, in the tabernacle. You will be blessed and Jesus will love your time spent with Him!

**God Bless You!**

**Father Grell**