

From the Pastor—November 12, 2017

My Birthday Even the slightest glance inside last week's bulletin allowed you to notice that my birthday is coming up! I am thankful to the parish for helping me celebrate. I was born on November 18, 1968. I'll do the math for you: I am turning 49 years old. Yikes, next year I enter into the 50's! My dad and his dad shared the same birthday, namely, November 13th. Mom and Dad were hoping that I would come on that day, but I was five days late. Wouldn't it have been something for three generations to have the same birthday?! Imagine the great newspaper story! *** My father turns 90 on his birthday on Monday. It is hard to think of my daddy as 90, and he is still so young at heart. If any of you are card senders, you could contact me by phone/e-mail/text, or the parish office, to be provided my home-home address to send my dad, Kenneth Grell, a birthday card. He would like that! *** Dad's dad, Frank Grell, lived four days past his 95th birthday. So, judging by the gene pool I share with them, I am only about halfway through this earthly life that God has graced me with! *** I told you in a bulletin last summer how my dad had chosen my name, Loras, before I was born...choosing it even before he had ever met my mother. When my sister, Mary, was the firstborn child in our family in 1966, he loved her greatly to this day...but Dad was very excited when I came into the world in 1968 as a boy so he could name me the boy's name of Loras. My namesake was a bishop, the Most Rev. Loras T. Lane of the Rockford, Illinois diocese. I have always liked the name of Loras, and I pray every day for Bishop Lane to bless me. He died at age 57 in June, 1968, while my mother was pregnant with me. It would have been so grand if my parents would have been able to have me meet him, either in person or through sending a card of my birth announcement. I did get to meet the bishop's brother, John Lane, at his home in Rockville, Maryland, before he died in 2014. *** When my birthday rolls around, I am awed by the gift of life that God and my parents have given me. It is always my privilege on my birthday to call and thank my parents for the gift of life. *** Little kids are sometimes just shocked to think that a priest actually has a birthday! Yes, indeed, we priests are born just like everyone else! *** When I was first ordained, the parish where I was the assistant priest didn't know when my birthday was. The pastor, Msgr. Leonard Kalin, was upset that I didn't tell them, as I preferred just to let the day slide by. From then on, I have been very open with telling my parish community when my birthday is. For those of you able to join me, from St. Mary's and St. Joseph's and the local area, please know of the celebration next Sunday, November 19, at 5:00 p.m.

Study Day Did you know that priests are required by the Canon Law of the Church to keep up our theological, scriptural, and pastoral knowledge through the years after we are ordained? Yes, studying is not only for the pre-priesthood days we spent in seminary. The Bishop holds us accountable, in a fatherly way, to keep up our studies. This is why four times a year, all of the priests get together for what we commonly call our "Priest Study Days." Each deanery area of priests also get together four times per year. Our most recent Study Day was this past Tuesday. We met at St. Gregory the Great Seminary in Seward. Priests from as far away as McCook, Benkelman, Rulo, and North Platte were in attendance. Our former pastors—my predecessors—Fathers Dennis Hunt and Craig Doty were among them. *** Each Study Day has a theme and special guest presenters. This time, we learned about a new initiative in the Church called The Amazing Parish. Started in 2013, this apostolate is a way for parishes to become ever greater communities to welcome, live, and love Jesus. I learned a lot about parish life, and I know I have been blessed here at St. Mary's and St. Joseph's with many wonderful people who love our parishes and love the Lord. I am just getting to know The Amazing Parish strategic plan to renew parish life across the US and beyond. I think the bottom line of what I learned is that the parish is a hugely important place, because it is here at the parish that we are preparing souls to enter God's Kingdom. What could be more important than that?! Compared to Fortune 500 companies, Wall Street movers-and-shakers, and major philanthropic and service-related entities, the parish outshines even their importance. Do you see what I mean? Quite likely, you will see and hear more from me about The Amazing Parish's outlook and plan for parishes to grow themselves to become always more conformed to Christ. Bishop Conley is in approval of The Amazing Parish and he is inviting each pastor and his parish communities to discern its own pathway in this initiative. If you want to learn more, the web site to go to is: amazingparish.org.

Husker Catholic Live! On November 3, I was blessed to attend the annual dinner-banquet for our Newman Center at the UN-L campus. They call it "Husker Catholic Live!" The theme this year was "Fully Known, Fully Loved." It was a great evening to see friends and many priests. The Newman Center in Lincoln is such a blessing to our Diocese and indeed, to the whole State of Nebraska.

RCIA update We had a great class in RCIA (Catholic Study Class) this past week. You are welcome to drop in and join us any session, on most Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. as announced in the bulletin. Here is an example of

the material covered last week. These four different Councils were held in the years between 325 and 481 as the early Church came to understand better who Jesus is. *** 1. Jesus is Fully God, Council of Nicaea (325 AD): “consubstantial with the Father”—God alone can save us. 2. Jesus is Fully Man, Council of Constantinople (381 AD): “became flesh...and was made man”—That which is not assumed is not healed. 3. Jesus is One Person, Council of Ephesus (431 AD): “the divinity and the humanity by their mysterious and ineffable coming together into unity have constituted for us the one Lord, Christ and Son” and Mary is the “Mother of God”. 4. Jesus has Two Natures, Council of Chalcedon (481 AD): “two natures without confusion or change, without division or separation”—He is begotten eternally from the Father and in time through Mary.

Beatification on EWTN Do you remember how in September I traveled to Oklahoma City for the first-ever Beatification of a US priest? The *second* US priest will be beatified by the Church on Saturday, November 18. You can watch this historic event where Father Solanus Casey will be beatified at Ford Field Stadium in Detroit. HOLY MASS AND BEATIFICATION OF FR. SOLANUS CASEY

Saturday, 11/18/2017, 3:00 PM, 2 hours

Saturday (replay), 11/18/2017, 11:00 PM, 2 hours

Living Liturgically Some great liturgical days come on the calendar this week to help you live with the heart and mind of the Church. *** November 13 is the feast of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini. She was an immigrant to the US who served immigrants. She died in Chicago; there is a shrine to her in Denver, CO, right along Interstate 70 as you go west toward the mountains. You can pray for all those immigrate and think of ways to serve the stranger. *** November 18 is the feast of St. Rose Philippine Duchesne. She came to the US in the 1800’s by ship from France. Her main outreach was through starting and staffing Catholic schools in the St. Louis area. Philippine (her common name) traveled to southwest Kansas and there the Native Americans referred to as “the woman who prays always.” You can observe this saint’s feast day by pausing to pray, giving that time as a sacrifice to God. You can also pray in gratitude for Catholic schools.

Corn and Beans The latest ag report I read in the paper said that Nebraska corn is 68% harvested, which is down from 82% at this time a year ago. The beans are more completely “in the bin” at this point, at over 90% harvested. I think all of the Grell crops are harvested; my dad and mom were happy to tell me that they heard the combine roaring to life and bringing in the corn crop on our home place last week. Keep up the great work in

the fields, everyone!

Vocations Week Our St. Mary’s and St. Joseph’s students in CCD were given a handout in class last week for National Vocations Week. It is from families just like yours that our future priests and religious sisters come from. Could it be someone from your family? Please pray for this and work hard to foster strong families to make up the next generation of beautiful marriages and religious vocations. See an insert in this week’s bulletin that encourages family life leading toward religious vocations. The insert has the creative slogan, “Vocations grow on trees...family trees.”

Thanksgiving Masses Does your family have the custom of attending Holy Mass for Thanksgiving Day? My family always went to Mass on this day; it just felt right. If you don’t have this custom, how about starting it this year? **We will have a Mass on Wednesday evening at 6:30 p.m. at St. Joseph in Giltner for the Eve of Thanksgiving. The Thanksgiving Day Mass will be at 9:00 a.m. in St. Mary’s Aurora.** And if you are going “over the river and through the woods” to grandmother’s house for Thanksgiving, you can contact the parish or the parish web site of your final destination and see what time their Thanksgiving Mass is.

JP II, We Still Love You! A special opportunity comes to our Diocese of Lincoln next week when a relic of Pope St. John Paul will be visiting us. You can read more about this in the latest Southern Nebraska Register in your postal mail box or at lincolndiocese.org. The relic, a vial of the Holy Father’s blood encased in a metal book, will be visible for veneration after Masses in four diocesan churches. *** On Sunday, Nov. 19, the relics will be available for veneration after the 12 p.m. Mass at Cristo Rey Church, 4221 J St., Lincoln, and after the 6 p.m. Mass at the Cathedral of the Risen Christ, 3500 Sheridan Blvd. *** On Monday, Nov. 20, the relics will be available for veneration after the 8:15 a.m. daily Mass at Sacred Heart Church, 500 N. 31st St., Lincoln, and after the 5:30 p.m. Mass at Sacred Heart Church in Crete, at 13th and Ivy streets. *** Relics of the saints, when venerated in faith, can bring untold blessings upon us. Please consider including veneration of JP II’s relics in your Sunday and Monday plans. Each of the veneration events will include an English and Spanish talk on the relic, as well as a bilingual rosary.

God Bless You!

Father Grell