

From the Pastor

Families of Priests One of the great things about our diocesan priests is that we have a great fraternal brotherhood. That spreads over to our families, who, indeed, are the source of our priestly calling. Once a year, all families of priests gather with our Bishop and Bishop Emeritus for an evening of community and friendship. That evening was last Sunday. The meeting place is the John XXIII Diocesan Center, which is on Sheridan Boulevard beside the Cathedral School in Lincoln. I was blessed to have my parents drive to Lincoln and attend. In fact, our entire family was there: my sister Mary and her husband Bob, and their son, Will; and my brother, Mark. Our five new priests were all there as we welcomed them and their families into this great society of communion. I really enjoy the time to visit and to see the siblings and parents of my brother priests. It is also a time to pray for any who have died in the past year. Only one of our priests has died since our last meeting, but a great number of priest parents have died and were prayed for in a special way. Bishop Conley specifically came to the Grell family table and greeted us, which is really cool. My Dad said that Bishop Emeritus Bruskewitz recognized him as my father, which doesn't surprise me. Bishop Bruskewitz will turn 82 on September 6. *** Two of the most special attendees were the mother of Bishop Conley, who lives in Kansas City, Kansas. Also present was Mrs. Mabel Folda, who is the mother of Bishop John Folda of the Fargo Diocese. Bishop Folda's mother still lives in Omaha, where she raised her family. Bishop Folda was formerly Msgr. Folda of our St. Gregory the Great Seminary in Seward. *** At each gathering, a list is given of all diocesan priests and the "next of kin" for each one. If you ever want to contact any of our priests, their parents or siblings, I can assist you through this list. *** Please always pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood; assuredly, some young men right now are being called from St. Mary and St. Joseph Churches. And pray for those of us already ordained, that we may be good and holy priests. Thank you!

Priest in the Ku Klux Klan This note has a shocking topic to absorb. A priest in the Arlington Diocese of Virginia recently took a leave of absence from active ministry. He wrote an op-ed in the diocesan newspaper after it became known that he had been a member of the Ku Klux Klan. It is a sad situation. It is difficult for me to even process this. Another article was written in a Washington DC newspaper by a person whose childhood parish had been served by this priest. As I understand, the priest had been convicted and fined for alleged hate

activity back in the early 1980's, but never paid the fine nor apologized to the families he victimized by his hate. *** It is difficult for me to fathom this situation. I have good and dear friends, priests and lay faithful, in this diocese. One of the things I have learned in recent weeks since the hate and racially-based protests have happened in our nation is that people with hate often have a great fear in their hearts. In some perverted way, they act out their fear by isolating others according to their minds' warped categories and hierarchies. The best solution for any of us is to look inside our hearts and see if we have such fear resulting from hidden hate. I have to say that I sometimes find myself with fear of people, much to my own shame and chagrin. But we break through that fear by reaching out and seeing each person as a beloved child of God. And if we have acted out our fear of others by isolating them and hurting them, we need to act justly to them, either outwardly and in person or inwardly through our prayer, by making reparation for our sins, and perhaps through a good confession. It is something to consider, and so I bring it before you in this bulletin note. Please pray for the priest I have mentioned here and for all the people who feel betrayed by the duplicity with which he seems to have lived since the 1980's.

Spirit Catholic Radio Another favorite program of mine on Spirit Catholic Radio is Called to Communion, with Dr. David Anders. It airs each weekday from 1:00-2:00 p.m. Dr. Anders is flat-out smart. He answers questions from those who are not Catholic. He also is great with suggestions for people who want to know how to respond to questions from non-Catholics. I think you would really enjoy the kind and direct way that Dr. Anders interacts with callers. He also takes questions via e-mail and the EWTN Facebook page. Previous episodes are available to download and listen to by podcast. Please tune in!

CCD Happenings Our CCD for grades K-8 and our Godteens/Godparents classes were in full swing this past week. St. Mary and St. Joseph is joined together this year. I enjoyed greeting students who arrived at 6:30...our parking lot is a busy place at this time of day on Wednesdays! It helps me to get to know students and parents when I am able to be at curbside and greet you. I made the rounds of the classrooms and took a question from one of the teachers, which I enjoyed answering for her class. I also was a little child-like myself, looking through classroom doors and waving at the students! After spending time at the hall, I visited the senior class at the home of their Godparents. They were having a great social time at the family fire pit. I really enjoyed sitting there on the nice August evening we were blessed with. *** I want to encourage all of you to pray for the students

to learn to live and love Jesus this school year. Pray for our volunteer teachers who have made a great sacrifice of commitment to this school year. I also want to encourage our youth choir to all of you students. The choir meets at 6:00 p.m., prior to the classes.

Living Liturgically One of the supreme gifts of our Catholic faith is what you might call “living liturgically”. You will probably notice this as being a consistent topic of mine, primarily because my Mom taught me and my brother and sister this way of living from our youth. Living liturgically means observing the Church’s seasons and feast days. It means claiming for our own spiritual growth the goodness of the saints and customs which have been handed down in the Church through the centuries. Here are a couple of examples of what I mean. *** On September 5th, we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the death of Mother Teresa. She is now Saint Teresa of Calcutta. We could live September 5, Tuesday, by reflecting upon her service to the poorest of the poor. We could renew our spiritual eyes to see Jesus in each person as she did. We could visit, phone call, text, or e-mail someone who is spiritually poor, or give alms toward the materially poor. *** Another great day to live liturgically is Friday, September 8. This day is the Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary. What a fun day to celebrate the first and best disciple of Jesus! Especially families with young children might consider on this day to have a birthday celebration for Mother Mary. You could bake or purchase a small cake and sing “happy birthday”. You could have your children draw art of a story of the Virgin Mary from the Scriptures. Praying a decade or an entire Rosary would be a great gift to give Mother Mary for her birthday, or to strive that day to “do whatever Jesus tells us” as Mary spoke of her Divine Son at the wedding feast of Cana. *** Our rich Catholic faith has so many opportunities like this to live our faith “out loud”. If you desire to live more for Christ, and you wonder how to share and show this desire, consider living liturgically.

Formed.org Our parish has a great gift in the web site subscription to www.formed.org. This site has an abundance of great resources to tap into. All you have to do is go to the web site and type in your e-mail address and any password you wish. When you are prompted to enter the parish code, our code for St. Mary and St. Joseph Churches is V7W3TZ. The video and audio resources are amazing. Lots can be learned about Jesus and His Church by giving time each day to formed.org.

Happenings in the Parish You may have noticed a few weeks ago at St. Mary Church that the American and Papal flags were in the sanctuary of church. This is the

appropriate placings of the flags. *** Along with parish hall water leakage from the 5-inch rain a couple of weeks ago, the rectory basement wall had serious leaking. The carpet along the east wall was very wet. The cinder block walls were moist and the paint is chipping. The Parish Council is aware of this problem. It may be that we have to dig out the basement wall and seal it better to keep out moisture. *** We are still seeking volunteers to serve on the Building and Grounds Committee. It is situations such as the basement water damage that gives rise to the benefit of a Building and Grounds Committee to serve our parish.

Jesus > Harvey When we are faced with images of the sufferings of Hurricane Harvey, we are struck with a sense wanting to help. We might question how Jesus can seem to be defeated by Harvey. But in actuality, Jesus gives us a chance to grow in holiness when we see a tragic natural disaster like Hurricane Harvey. In addition to the devastating material losses, the people affected by this storm are fighting a spiritual battle. We can help their spiritual battle by praying for them. The best way to pray is at daily Mass. Your Sunday Mass prayers are powerful. And during the week, is your 7:30-8:00 a.m. time of the morning free for attending daily Mass? If your schedule does not allow attendance at daily Mass, you can stop by and make a visit to Jesus at St. Mary or St. Joseph Church. Seeing Jesus in the tabernacle (he is truly there!) can unite us in prayer with those who need us. We can light a candle as we visit Jesus. We can also pray the Stations of the Cross (at church or at home) to unite the sufferings of Jesus with those suffering due to Harvey. The Divine Mercy chaplets, and the Rosary, are also wonderful outreaches. Your prayers are sorely needed, in addition to any material goods you can provide. *** A couple of parishioners in my former parish have been called to duty by the US Air Force and the Omaha Fire Department to help with their presence and expertise with this natural disaster.

I am Grateful The well-wishes and the outreach to me has been so welcoming since I arrived in June. I am happy to be here with you all at St. Mary and St. Joseph. I hope I can be a spiritual father to you in a way that will help you on your journey through this life. And seeing your Christian witness will help me in my vocation and my journey. Living and loving life together, we can see Jesus in Heaven forever!

God Bless You!

Father Grell