

From the Pastor—November 18, 2018

Half a Century! I was struggling for what to say in regard to my 50th birthday, which is today! November 18th. But an idea came to me. See the separate insert.

Mass Times Update I am going to delay the switch in Mass times on Sunday mornings until January, 2019. That seems a good time to make the switch. Also, it gives me more time to survey any who wish to weigh in on their preference. These three options are what the survey would offer, if I were to print it today:

1. 8:00 a.m. at St. Mary's and 10:30 a.m. at St. Joseph's.
2. 8:30 a.m. at St. Mary's and 11:00 a.m. at St. Joseph's.
3. 8:15 a.m. at St. Mary's and 10:45 a.m. at St. Joseph's.

Do you understand my reasoning for these three choices? Each has been suggested to me by parishioners. Each gives me the 2.5-hour gap which I need for my health and energy on Sundays. Each is keeping the strongly-embedded and foundational ordering of the St. Mary's Mass first and St. Joseph's second on Sunday mornings. And each is an attempt to change times as little as possible. To emphasize again, all of these scenarios have been suggested to me by parishioners. It seems to me that the shift of only 15 or 30 minutes for either parish is a reasonable balance to what I perceive as a change necessary for my health. *** I am still hearing from people. Maybe the advice I most need to heed is, "Father, just do what you need to do." But I am not taking this lightly. My home parish of St. Joseph's, Beatrice, last made a Sunday Mass change when I was in grade school. Father Danko changed the Saturday night Mass from 7:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. (I think the Huskers were playing in several night games, and he didn't want to miss them!). St. Joseph's has maintained that time for decades, along with the Sunday morning times of 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. Of course, Beatrice does not have a mission parish, and we do, which drives my concern to be fair to both parishes as separate communities of faith. *** What do you sense as the pulse of the people to what I have written here? I certainly don't want to upset anybody, and I apologize if talk of Mass times has troubled you. I don't intend to cause unrest in your hearts. Rather, I desire to serve you at Holy Mass, to sing, and pray, and preach, and celebrate the Lord's mysteries well...and then to congregate and socialize with you afterward.

New Books [edited and re-printed from Nov. 11] Our new books for the readings, prayers, and all hymns for Holy Mass will debut on December 1-2. It is called *Breaking Bread*, published by Oregon Catholic Press. It is a one-volume book. *** One notation is important for all to know: I am not planning to put the back cover of the *Breaking Bread* inside of the plastic sleeve of the cover. This is for one main reason: the St. Michael Prayer on the back cover of the *Breaking Bread* would be covered over. I recently visited another parish and they also did not have the plastic sleeve covering over the back flap of the *Breaking Bread*.

Census Each year for about 10 years, the Diocese has asked us to count the number of people at all Masses during the first two weekends of October.

Statistically, it is probably important to make the count on the same weekends each year. And with each diocesan parish making the census count, it takes account of the natural flow of people going elsewhere for Mass on a weekend, because the count includes all, not just those who are registered members of the parish. Without intending a professional analysis, here is what the numbers showed for our parishes:

October 6-7

St. Mary's—89 people at 5:00 p.m. and 129 people at 8:30 a.m.

St. Joseph's—86 people at 10:30 a.m.

October 13-14

St. Mary's—107 people at 5:00 p.m. and 108 people at 8:30 a.m.

St. Joseph's—44 people at 10:30 a.m.

You will notice the big disparity at the two St. Joseph's Masses. I specifically noticed a bigger turnout of St. Mary's parishioners on October 6 who happened to come to St. Joseph's that day. What is interesting is that despite of that flux at St. Joseph's, the census at St. Mary's averaged around 110 people for each of the four Masses that were counted. *** I want to thank those ushers and others who took the count for me. The Bishop uses such census numbers to determine the health of a parish and diocese in the important work of praying the Sunday Mass as a family of God.

Bishop's Appeal for Vocations Both parishes exceeded the given goal for the Bishop's Appeal for Vocations. This is extraordinary! I as pastor am very proud of your generosity. The numbers are reported in the collections part of this bulletin. Please note that this campaign is available to make a pledge to any time before January 31, 2019. I made my gift on-line at the lincolndiocese.org web site. If you want to give and missed our pledge takers at Mass, you may still go to the web site or contact the office. *** Thank you to you who were pledge takers, for being the "face" of this year's campaign. *** Our future priests appreciate you all!

State Capitol Eucharistic Procession On November 4, our Diocese of Lincoln held a Eucharistic Procession around the State Capitol in Lincoln. **It. Was. Amazing.** *** Bishop James Conley came forth from St. Mary's (the Old Cathedral) carrying Jesus in the monstrance. A great honor guard preceded the Bishop and the servers. A small banner naming each parish in the Diocese was carried by those in the procession. About 40-50 of us priests walked in procession. We had Benediction (blessing) at four outdoor altars. Father Ramon Decaen (previously of Doniphan/Kenesaw) gave one of the Benediction talks in Spanish. Bishop Conley exhorted us to keep our eyes focused upon Jesus. *** The procession lasted about 1.5 hours. A 2-minute youtube video can be found if you search for: Eucharistic Procession around Nebraska State Capitol. A couple of local TV stations provided coverage on their nightly newscasts. The story is written up at remnantnewspaper.com, which estimated that 2,500 people participated. *** There is much more I could say. But what struck me most as I was walking was that (not in a morbid way), it seemed to be a walking unto death. Not death as in martyrdom, but death as in to the world and

that we must be willing to live our faith unto death if we wish to spend all of eternity with the Most Holy Trinity.

God Bless You!

Father Grell