

From the Pastor—February 4, 2018

Family Time On Monday last week, I journeyed to the friendly environs of Gage County to see Mom and Dad...and my brother and sister came, too! We had a nice family gathering at the Good Samaritan Society where Dad has lived since November 16. He continues to do well and walks confidently with the aid of a walker. Dad was also in rare form in talking and teasing with us. I account this as a blessing of his Irish heritage! The good sense of humor serves him well, even though he would rather be home with Mom. She for her part is holding up pretty well with managing our farming operation paperwork and keeping Dad company in the afternoons. When us kids and Mother were preparing to leave Good Sam, Dad walked us to the door. He wanted to walk us all the way out to our cars, but that may be a bit too much for now. *** We took Mom out to eat as a birthday supper after we departed from Dad. A new restaurant on Court Street in Beatrice served us well; we had never been there. It had the Husker-Wisconsin men's basketball game on TV. As I drove back to Aurora, I listened on the Husker Sports Network and heard the thrilling 2nd-half comeback and 11-point NU win. Kent Pavelka, the Husker play-by-play announcer, has been at this position since my childhood. It is fun listening to his excitability. Listening to the ballgame and postgame accompanied me all the way back to Aurora. It was a great day with my family.

Tom Osborne A couple of Saturdays ago, I went shopping at the Aurora Mall. I walked in, grabbed a shopping basket, and headed east past the checkout counters. There, standing at the Subway counter, was Tom Osborne...the Tom Osborne. Shocked as I was, I didn't stop to say "hi" as someone else was already speaking to him. I don't know who they were, but I ran into them a few minutes later during my shopping and remarked to them, "Not every day that one gets to chat with Coach Osborne." We shared a smiling moment. Although I would have loved to engage the Coach in conversation, I figured that the dear man was just hoping to be in-and-out to grab a sandwich for lunch. Undoubtedly, he has traveled most every highway in the State of Nebraska and knows places where he can get a bite to eat. If I would have said "hi" to him, I may have said, "Thanks for your help in getting Scott Frost to come home." Or, I may have (nervously) asked, "So, what is your favorite Subway sandwich?" I have no doubt that the Subway sandwich artist was at that moment preparing the most famous sandwich of her life! I checked media outlets, but I saw no indication of why Coach Osborne was in the area. *** The first time I saw him in person was when I was around 12 years old. I was rabidly in love with Husker football at the time. He and his family were at the Cool Crest Mini-Golf at 48th and O Streets in Lincoln. (This classic place is long since disappeared from the map.) Our family, too, was going mini-golfing on that occasion. *** The second time I saw Coach Osborne close-up was at the door of his car. I was on a school field trip with my kids from Lawrence, Sacred Heart School in 2013. As we drove up to our first stop at Memorial Stadium, a girl named Molly suddenly said, "It's Tom Osborne!!!" Barely giving our vehicle a chance to park, Molly dashed out of

the car and across the parking lot to where Tom was getting into his car. Being the chaperone, and a bit star-struck myself, I quickly followed after Molly. I didn't want this 7th grade girl to be in the next day's newspaper for assaulting Nebraska's most famous citizen. I asked Coach if he had a minute to say "hello" to our kids from Lawrence. He graciously did, and then said he was meeting his wife, Nancy, for lunch and that he therefore could not give us more time. It was a thrill for all of us!

C-C-C-cold! Last Sunday morning, when the air temperature was 18 degrees, our church furnace at St. Joseph's was not working. I have an interesting internal thermometer...I very quickly get overheated and/or frozen at the altar during Holy Mass. I offered the 10:30 Mass quite expediently; I suppose some of you in the congregation were as chilly as I was. In any case, I went to the extreme of wearing my stocking cap on my head and a scarf around my neck...during Mass. I don't think I have ever done that before. By the end of the Mass, I really was not feeling well. I felt cold the entire rest of the day. Please know my apologies as I was absent at the dinner we had for our parish catechists later that day. The furnace is repaired; we will keep an eye on it and report to you if anything else needs to be done at this time.

Ash Wednesday The schedule for Masses on Ash Wednesday bears some explanation. First of all, please note that ASH WEDNESDAY IS NOT A HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION. If you cannot make it to Mass on Ash Wednesday, it is not a sin. Of note secondly, I have placed the first Mass of the day in St. Joseph, Giltner, at 7:00 a.m. This is early, admittedly, but Mass will be over by 7:45 to allow school staff and students to dash the several blocks across town to be on time for school. For students at Aurora, this Mass will probably not work. However, this brings me to my third point: the St. Mary's evening Mass at 6:30 p.m. will hopefully work for all Aurora and Hampton School kids. And any Giltner students or staff that are done with extra-curriculars could make it to Aurora, hopefully, for this Mass. The 6:30 p.m. Mass coincides with regular CCD time, which is a good fit for many. Fourthly and finally, another Mass that day will be at 12:10 p.m. at St. Mary's. This is for those for whom the 7:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. times pose darkness driving issues. Also, this 12:10 Mass will be the "lunch-time" Mass for people who work 9-5 jobs. It should be completed by 1:00-ish, depending on how long it takes to distribute ashes. *** For anyone for whom none of these Masses works out, wherever you are traveling or commuting on this day will hopefully have a Mass for you. Look on area parishes' web sites, and don't be afraid to call parish offices or the pastors ahead of time.

Parishes' Altar Societies I gathered the officers of the Altar Societies of our two parishes last Thursday. We had a good, fruitful discussion on how the parish needs to track parish income, which includes money earned by the good works of these parish women's groups. Our parish bookkeeper, Diane, was able to assist me in fielding questions from the officers. Each parish has its own unique circumstances, but I think each woman present learned valuable information about her own parish and the other parish. Piggybacking upon the Finance Council with St. Mary's that I reported on in last week's

bulletin, and the January Parish Council meeting for St. Mary's, I am glad to have started the conversation on how the Diocese is asking all 135 parishes to follow the 2005 Accounting Manual. This decade-old accounting manual was not implemented fully at its publication in 2005. With our new Bishop Conley's arrival in 2012, and a shift in diocesan organization following shortly thereafter, many new policies about finances have been given to us priests to follow. The impactful moment for me of the changes was in September, 2016, when Bishop Conley addressed diocesan finances thoroughly to over 125 of us priests at one of our Study Days at the Seward seminary. It is no surprise, and of no one's fault, that some of the financial policies which I am explaining at this time sound new, because they are new. They are also a bit awkward to explain in so far as the accounting practices for a church entity like a diocese or parish are wholly unlike almost any other business or corporation. I thank you all, from my heart, for your patience during this time of explanation and roll-out of the diocesan guidelines. If there are questions which I cannot answer, and there will be, I will either find out the answer or ask members of our parishes' leadership to contact our Diocesan Finance Office or Sarah Rohrs, a financial consultant.

Second Grade Parents We have 13 students preparing for First Confession (Reconciliation) and First Holy Communion. This is a great number, representing students in both St. Mary's and St. Joseph's. We had a meeting of parents last Wednesday, and it was an engaging and fruitful encounter. Please pray for our young people and their families as they prepare to receive Jesus!

Mounted Fire Extinguishers As I have seen in previous parish assignments, having fire extinguishers with up-to-date tagging and located in strategic locations is very, very important. You will notice in our parishes that several new extinguishers have been added, including new wall mounts and brackets to hold them in place. This is a project I determined needed to be completed, and I am glad that we have this added level of safety for our congregations.

Nebraska Walk for Life The Walk for Life in Lincoln last Saturday was a great experience as always. It seemed to me to be a bigger crowd than the past couple of years. Along with pro-lifers in abundance was a small but vocal crowd of people, whom God loves, who are pro-abortion. They have mistakenly bought into the lie that abortion is a mother's right to choose, without considering the rights of the little girl or boy conceived in the mother's womb. I prayed for this group of people, standing nearby them during speeches given at the State Capitol. As we walked for life through downtown Lincoln, it was wonderful to see many friends, old and new alike, as well as several relatives of mine. At the Student Union on UN-L's campus, the speaker was a woman named Ann McElhinney. She is a journalist who co-authored the book "Gosnell: America's Biggest Serial Killer" about convicted Philadelphia abortionist, Kermit Gosnell. The book, and an as yet unreleased feature film, details the criminal investigation and subsequent trial of Kermit Gosnell. Gosnell operated what the District Attorney of Philadelphia referred to as the "House of Horrors." McElhinney's speech was difficult, but necessary, for us to hear. We must pray and work, and

work some more, so that no one ever feels that abortion is an option. We must not only make abortion illegal, but unthinkable. Kermit Gosnell is currently serving three consecutive life sentences for the murders of three full-term babies. Please pray for him. I would encourage you to "like" the Gosnell movie at www.facebook.com/gosnellmovie/ and follow it on Twitter. *** On a side note, but related, I know that our parish of St. Mary's has a pro-life sign along Highway 14 south of town. But it is badly faded, and I think we know that it needs some freshening up. I would also like to encourage a movement for our St. Joseph's congregation to work toward a pro-life sign, perhaps mounted along the Giltner Spur. Very much in the same thought, signs of the image of Divine Mercy and the phrase "Jesus, I Trust in You!" are also effective to passersby and are a personal favorite of mine. Is there any interest from you, dear reader, to contact me or the parish office and work on one or another of these signage opportunities?

FODY Foods I would call my health condition of "fructose intolerance" a rather invisible illness. The acronym "FODY" stands for sugars which I am trying to eat in small quantities to aid my digestion. It is a lot to explain and probably comes under the category of TMI (Too Much Information). When I eat non-FODY foods, I can tell a big difference in how I feel. Certain foods become triggers to my not feeling well. The invisibility I mention here comes into play in that I may not look sick, but the effects of fructose intolerance make me not able to function at the high-energy level that I am accustomed to. Life's stressors are also triggers which influence my digestive health more than I care to admit. I have an app on my iPhone which helps me discern what foods to shop for and what foods to order when eating out. For instance, I bought FODY ketchup this week because it doesn't have the additives of onions or garlic. Onions and garlic trigger my fructose condition. For those who want to learn more, you can do a search engine look for "FODY foods" or for "Monash University Australia." Please bear with me as I try to become more accustomed to my new way of eating healthful foods.

Good Friday I have spoken about Ash Wednesday and the Easter Vigil in previous bulletins. I also want to mention a word about Good Friday, which falls on March 30th this year. Good Friday is a great day to keep free on your calendar. Try to avoid extra activities, especially if you are in a position of organizing activities for people of any age. I remember one of my past parishes where Good Friday as a day off from school was used by a sports team for practice. To me, the sports should have taken a backseat to families being quiet and prayerful, together, at home and at church. So, I want to encourage you now to do what you can to keep March 30th as a day to meditate and keep a quiet demeanor as we observe our Savior's death upon the Cross.

FORMED.org Renewal We began our renewal to Formed.org this week! Such great resources are at this site. Please go to it, and remember our parishes' code of V7W3TZ. You can also get the formed app in your app store; I have it, and it works great!

God Bless You!
Father Grell