

From the Pastor—February 25, 2018

Daily Mass Swell I have been pleased with people's commitment to daily Mass for Lent. Please know that when you attend any Mass, Sunday or daily, you offer to God the sacrifice of your life—of your heart, mind, and body. You offer along with the priest the “work of human hands” and the “fruit of the vine”, as the prayer of offering says at offertory. Whether you have joys and happiness, or sorrows and pains, Holy Mass is the place to be to present yourself as a living sacrifice to the Most Holy Trinity.

Ad orientem I have continued for several months now the practice of facing the Lord with the people in offering daily Mass. For those who have seen this, I know it is different, maybe even uncomfortable. I get that. But think of it like the priest being the bus driver. Would you want your bus driver facing you in your seats? Also, I know that there is more comfort for knowing what to say and when to stand/sit/kneel when you see the priest's face. But as I wrote above, your main intention at Holy Mass is to offer yourself to the Lord. Jesus doesn't mind if you hesitate as you stand or kneel, or if you are unsure when to say the prayers. He wants the offering of your heart, of your presence, of your mind.

Latin We began singing the Holy, Holy and Lamb of God in Latin at Mass for Lent. Latin is the universal language of the Church. It places everyone on equal footing when worshipping the Lord at any Mass at any place in the world. Our Bishop (and the Church universal) desires that the people of God know how to chant these parts of Mass in Latin. And it's really not as foreign as you might think. For example, “holy” in Latin is rendered “sanctus”. Think of the English words “sanctify” or “sanctimonious”. We might not use these words in common language, but this is precisely one of the reasons to use the ancient Latin at Mass: we are speaking to God, and not speaking in common, ordinary language. Please be open to learning with all of us how to sing these Latin Mass settings.

Stations at Wednesday Night Lights Under our Wednesday Night Lights of CCD, we prayed the Stations of the Cross last week. For a prayer that is intense in its content, and in its standing and kneeling, speaking and singing, I was so proud of how our 95 CCD kids prayed. I asked them to be silent for a few moments at each station, to meditate on the Lord's suffering—they even observed these silences well! Don't let anyone tell you that a young person cannot silently reflect; not only can they be silent, but untold beauty comes from the heart of a child as they do so. Please know that all CCD parents at drop-off at or before 6:30 are very welcome to stay for the half-hour Stations, as are any high schoolers or adults from St. Mary's and St. Joseph's parishes. Your non-Catholic friends might find the Stations of the Cross very fulfilling as well.

My Confession Pledge As stated in my homily last weekend, I promised for my personal Lenten practice to being on time for 7:00 a.m. Confessions on weekday mornings. I am doing well on my pledge so far! In my homily, I invited people to come to Confessions in the morning, even if your schedule does not allow you to stay

for Holy Mass at 7:30. No one will mind if you come to Confession and then need to leave to meet the day's responsibilities. Of course, you are very welcome to stay for Mass if it's possible.

As announced... I want to emphasize a couple of things from my announcements last weekend. Remember to give your donation toward your subscription to the Southern Nebraska Register. And remember the great opportunity to join at the Theology on Tap event in Grand Island at the Chicken Coop on the upcoming Mondays.

Special Lenten Talk I want to invite you to a Lenten talk that I will give on Thursday, March 1st, at 6:30 p.m. The talk is titled, “How I Pray: Growing Up in Prayer with Father Grell”. My basic goal will be to share what I have learned about prayer as a priest, and how my priestly prayer life is built upon our Grell family prayer life while growing up. Youth and adults alike would enjoy my talk. This will be held at St. Mary's for both parishes.

Rev. Billy Graham As a Catholic, I have always admired the Rev. Billy Graham. He died this past week at the grand age of 99. May he rest in peace with the Lord he loved so much.

Legion of Mary Here is my second entry about the Legion of Mary. The two wings of the Legion are considered to be active members and auxiliary members. Both types of members are needed for the Legion of Mary to “fly” in bringing its members the stated goal of greater holiness. Common to each type of member is reciting the Rosary every day. Some distinctions between the two types are what I will discuss in this section next week. Could you be called to be in the Legion of Mary?

God's Gift of Forgiveness Last week's bulletin included an insert about how God wants to forgive us. This week, I am publishing the steps of a good confession. This format is the standard by which we are currently teaching our youth to go to Confession. All are invited to use the steps and words I have printed here. For your convenience, these steps are posted inside the confessional at both parishes. Since the lighting at St. Joseph's is very minimal inside the confessional, I have posted these steps of Confession on the front pews.

Avoiding Meat at Tournaments [re-printed] The Catholic law of abstaining from meat on Fridays can be made difficult when upcoming Fridays are full of athletic and academic tournaments, meets, and conferences for our youth. I encourage you to resist the urge to order a hot dog or hamburger in the concession stands provided at Lenten Friday events. Hopefully, many of these events consider our Catholic faith and offer a meatless option. I enjoy these events, but we need to know that such events don't excuse us from living out our Catholic faith.

Good Friday [re-printed] 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. To me, almost everything as a social activity that would make us race around busily should take a backseat to families being quiet and prayerful, together, at home and at church. Please do what you can to keep March 30th as a day to meditate and live quietly as we observe Jesus's death upon the Cross.

God Bless You!

Father Grell