

## **From the Pastor—March 18, 2018**

**State Basketball Dash!** I really enjoyed my trip into the Boys State Basketball Tournament last Thursday. We began the day with Holy Mass at an earlier time, 6:30 a.m. Prior to that, I displayed my Huskies and Hornets long-sleeved t-shirts by going live on facebook and twitter to promote the whole day. My brother's law office is in the Haymarket, so I have gotten to know the parking and traffic schemes there. I was planning and plotting how I would arrange to be at the Aurora game at 9:00 and then the Giltner game at 10:45. The first part of my plan worked well, using my credit card to pay for a parking place a few blocks from the Pinnacle Bank Arena. I wanted some space between my car and the bigger traffic flow that I was anticipating after the game. I strode down the street, made it through the ticket line in short order, and then proceeded to the Aurora fan section. A parishioner had an available seat and graciously offered it to me; I saw a number of you there, either up close or from afar. As the clock wound down in the Aurora game, I excused myself with just under a minute to play to begin my dash across town. The Giltner game was played at Lincoln Southeast High School. You may know that Southeast High's southwest property line borders our diocesan offices of the John XXIII Center, which sits on Sheridan Boulevard along with our Cathedral of the Risen Christ and Chancery offices. I chose what I thought was the quickest route across town (Normal Boulevard to 27<sup>th</sup> Street to Sheridan), with plans to park in our John XXIII parking lot. I knew from experience that the diocesan parking lot is rarely full, and I figured that as a priest I needn't have obtained special permission to park there☺. When I arrived at the parking lot, I saw the Giltner bus parked there, along with a couple of other teams' buses, which made me smile. It is a goodly walk to go from the diocesan parking lot to the main entrance of Southeast High School, but my thought was that quick walking was a better ploy than circling a busy parking lot nearer the front doors. As I purchased my ticket for the Giltner game, I walked into the gym about 2.5 minutes before tip-off—I had made it!!! \*\*\* I enjoyed both games, and seeing the support of our communities. I am not a big "hollerer" during games (usually), but I do enjoy observing the efforts of players in accordance with their coaches' strategies, as well as the spirit and support of student managers, cheer squads, student sections, and all the adults cheering on their team of choice. \*\*\* Thank you all for giving me last Thursday as a great memory of my first year of serving in these parishes!

**Sharing our Facility** I was not the pastor when the decision was made to add to our St. Mary's Church in the years 2012-2014. It sure seems to me like the decision was very sound. For example, consider how our parish was able to share Christian fellowship over three consecutive days last week, March 11, 12, and 13. On Sunday evening, the Knights of Columbus Council 8010 hosted its annual Spaghetti Feed. I was present from around 5:00 till 6:30, and the pace of those arriving for the festivities seemed constant. Lots of laughter and enjoyment was in the air, which was very fulfilling to me and many others. On Monday morning, our parish held the funeral and funeral dinner for parishioner Pat Sheehan. Since Ms. Sheehan's burial was to be held later that day

over 100 miles away in the Manley Cemetery, Cass County, it was doubly important that we were able to provide a beautiful venue for the funeral luncheon for the family and mourners immediately following the Mass of Christian burial. Then, Tuesday evening came along, and it was a rather comical scene. The Aurora High School wrestling team held its annual post-season banquet in our St. Mary's Hall. Scheduled also that night were our RCIA class and our monthly Knights of Columbus business meeting. The wrestling banquet was fully in motion by the time that RCIA students and KC members showed up for their 7:00 meetings. With the huge turnout of wrestling enthusiasts, it made the 7:00 o'clock-arriving, smaller groups hesitant to know where to go so as not to disturb the banquet. It all made me smile☺, happy that our parish was engaging people in so many ways. The hall is being used well, and I am happy for the vision, and generosity, of the parish to have constructed such a great facility.

**Passiontide** With the Fifth Sunday of Lent, we enter into Passiontide. This is a time of more earnest turning toward the Cross and Our Lord's Passion.

**Covering the Statues** Part of Passiontide is the custom of veiling over the statues. Please read the enclosed bulletin insert to learn the importance of this custom; parents, please take some time to answer your children's questions about it.

**New Life!** With talk of the Cross, the Passion, and Christ's death, we must not neglect our focus on the new life in Christ which we gain through his suffering. Keep praying for that new life to be bestowed and renewed within you and your family this Easter!

**My Catholic Radio Conversion** Inserted into our bulletins this week is a flyer to highlight the Spirit Catholic Radio Care-a-thon. Twice a year, the radio station "stands down" on its normal daytime programming to ask us, the listeners, to support its mission. I myself experienced a conversion to Catholic radio. When it was first proposed to bring Catholic radio to our Diocese of Lincoln, I was very skeptical. I couldn't see the point of it. But as time went along, and especially when the 91.5 FM at Wood River went on the air in 2011, I have become a diehard supporter of Spirit Catholic Radio and Catholic radio in general. It is important to realize that none of the five dioceses (all three in Nebraska, Des Moines in Iowa, and LaCrosse in Wisconsin) which primarily benefit from the Spirit Radio network give financial support to the network. It is totally listener-supported. Listening to Spirit Catholic Radio has broadened my view of our beautiful Catholic faith, and it has made me a better priest. I don't know where I would be without it—I simply would be impoverished in many ways. Please listen in this week and consider making a pledge of prayer or financial gifts to the network's spring appeal.

**March 27-28** Penance services at Seward St. Vincent's (6:30 p.m.) and York St. Joseph's (7:00 p.m.) will be held on March 27 and 28, respectively. These will be opportunities to receive God's mercy in Holy Confession, with around 8 or 10 of us priests at each service.

**Legion of Mary** Are you interested in the Legion? I hope to mention it in my homily this weekend.

**God Bless You!**

**Father Grell**