

From the Pastor—April 1, 2018

Chrism Mass My day on Monday, March 26, was quite joyful and eventful. Here is a breakdown:

Sister I dropped by unannounced to my sister at her job in Lincoln. I suppose this is something that is “Grell” about me, as my dad enjoyed doing this to us kids or to friends of our family—stopping by unannounced and seeing people at work. My sister was crunching numbers at her computer—she is an accountant—and I asked if she had time for lunch. I was fortunate that she did, although she did have a meeting that made us scramble a bit to get our time together in. It worked out well to see Mary and get caught up on things. Brother-sister relationships are pretty special!

Bishop Rodriguez I next headed over to the Cathedral where the remainder of the day’s activities took place. Our speaker for a day of reflection was the auxiliary bishop of Denver, Bishop Jorge Rodriguez. He focused a lot on priestly holiness, and that people gain a lot from seeing us priests at prayer. The bishop gave many quotations from saints and popes, some of which I jotted down. The afternoon of prayer was held in front of the exposed Sacred Host in the monstrance, with confessions being offered just for us as priests.

Jubilarians We had a total of six jubilarians honored at the Chrism Mass itself and the banquet afterward. Our diocesan custom is to recognize the 25-year and 50-year classes, and then every five years beyond 50 years. We had one jubilarian of 60 years, but his health did not allow him to be present. The remaining five jubilarians were vested in special vestments to honor their good years of service to the people of God. I am coming in upon 22 years of priesthood this year, so, God willing, I will be honored in 2021 along with my three classmates.

Priestly Promises A moving part of the Chrism Mass is where we renew our priestly promises. It means a great deal to us to renew these promises we made on our ordination day. The bishop also renewed his commitment to being the chief shepherd of the diocese.

Blessings of Oils The three oils were blessed at the Mass, namely the oil of the sick, the oil of catechumens, and the Chrism oil. A special ceremony exists to welcome these three newly-blessed oils back to the parish, but I have never done it nor seen it done. One of these years, it would be great to do.

Socializing afterward After the Mass, there is a little time for socializing on the front steps of the Cathedral with the hundreds of lay faithful who attend the Mass. I saw parishioners from four of my former parishes and one from my native parish. So this is always a fun time, to get caught up on people’s lives and see young children who have grown into young adults.

Banquet The banquet after the Mass is for priests and seminarians. All told, probably about 200 of us attended the banquet. It is a sit-down, buffet style meal with all the trimmings. It is very much a favorite time of our whole year as priests. Each of the jubilarians has a chance to speak, and I want to share with you some of the memorable things they said.

Father Leo Kosch At 25 years, Father Kosch said he has always seen the silver

jubilarians as representing the half-time of a parade! (Meaning, “only” 25 years seems like “we’ve only just begun” to quote a song.) Father Kosch gave thanks to his parents, aged 90 and 81, who still live in their own home in Columbus. His dad has a 2:00 a.m. holy hour during which he has kept vigil with Jesus for over 20 years. Kosch joked that if lives to be 76, he will see us again at his 50-year celebration!

Father Ronald Homes You have to know this man to really get a sense of the hilarious-ness that he brought to the banquet hall on Monday. Father Homes is also a 25-year priest; he was a deacon when I started in first theology at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary. He spoke of how during high school, he *hated* school. And he even used to say this during seminary. Father Homes spoke of the irony that now he has *taught* in Catholic schools for 25 years! He spoke of how after high school, he worked at The Van House, refurbishing vans. (He is a self-proclaimed gear head.) A co-worker of his, nicknamed “Bruiser”, provided him a sign that he would make a good priest. As Father Homes was discerning entering the seminary, he told a priest that he really liked girls and so couldn’t go to the seminary. The priest said, no, that is actually a good reason to go!

Father John Keefe He was our sole 50-year jubilarian. Father Keefe served here at Aurora and Giltner in the late 1990’s. He also served twice at our diocesan mission in Venezuela. He spoke fondly of his Irish grandmother and that he was able twice to celebrate Mass in the church of her baptism in Ireland.

Father Nicholas Baker Father Baker is celebrating 55 years. He gave a hilarious speech on what is his “next step”. One of his quips was that after he dies, people will stand at his grave after his burial and say, “He wasn’t so bad...deep down.” Everyone howled at this joke and many others that he gave.

Father Edwin Stander He also celebrated 55 years as a priest. Out of all the jubilarians, he was the most emotional during his speech; which is kind of surprising, if you know him. He spoke about how great it is to be a priest of the Diocese of Lincoln

Book Give-away for Easter I had an enjoyable time praying and choosing a book to give away for Easter. It is from Catholic Answers, which is an apologetics and evangelization outreach based in San Diego (see their web site at catholic.com.) The author of the book, Trent Horn, is so fantastic on the air of their radio broadcast. He writes as speaks, always from a point of charity and in a friendly manner. I like the thesis of his book, that we ask ourselves, “Why are we Catholic?” when we could choose any religion whatsoever to follow. He gives many logical reasons for why we are Catholic. I think you will find a good-hearted attempt by Mr. Horn to answer many complicated questions that Catholics are often asked.

My Sense of Surge I want to write more next week about Easter. Suffice to say for now that I sense we all need the surge of the power of Jesus Christ’s Resurrection from the dead. Let us be in awe, and be carried away in a surge of grace by this miracle!

Go to Formed.org Our parish code is V7W3TZ.
God Bless You!

Father Grell