

From the Pastor—April 15, 2018

Grell On Gospel On the Third Sunday of Easter, the Lord Jesus makes another post-Resurrection appearance. As I told the K-8 CCD students this past week, He was truly dead but truly came back to life! We can let this fact of our faith go in one ear and out the other. But when we hear the Gospel's account this weekend of how fearful and incredulous for joy the disciples were to see Jesus alive, it gives us pause to reconsider if we deep-down realize the miracle of Easter. Our Lord "opened their minds to understand the Scriptures." I can say for myself that I don't pray enough for the intention of God opening my mind in prayer, to understand the Scriptures or to understand my daily life's struggles and challenges. How about you? I think sometimes we are a bit afraid to want our minds fully open to the Lord's promptings. We don't want to see the truth about ourselves, our families, our network of friends. The Easter season calls us to place ourselves with the Risen Lord, to see what the first disciples saw and to feel what they felt. A good place to start is simply to ask the Lord to make your mind open to receiving His message and promptings to take action in your lives. Join me in trying to work on this!

My Monday—Gage County and Legion of Mary I spent a day in Gage County taking care of my personal income taxes. People are sometimes surprised that a priest has to file a tax return with the IRS; yes, we do! I have gone to the same tax accountant for over a decade. I have known her all my life at St. Joseph Parish in Beatrice. She has practiced tax accounting in Beatrice for many years. I have a friend who puts together all of my receipts and expenditures, and then I take this information to my accountant. She knows the uniqueness of a priest's situation on tax returns, such as that we are required to live in the home that the parish provides for us. This and dealing with our car allowance and business miles all makes for interesting tax categories that make us priests as full-time ministers of the Gospel unique examples of Americans who file tax returns. Obviously, seeing my accountant this past week is pushing the April 15 traditional deadline☺, but it is all going to work out. *** I spent some time at our family farm for lunch with my mother prior to seeing my accountant. *** The remainder of the afternoon was spent with Mom and Dad at the Good Samaritan. It was great to see them for the first time in about a month. I have talked often on the phone with them, but there is always a great bond formed in seeing them in person. Dad is doing well, using a cane proficiently, according to his care plan. We as a family are looking into the discharge process for him from the Good Sam, so this is breaking news to share with you all! Mom and us kids think he can get along at home, especially in the spring and summer, so this is our goal and is certainly where Dad wants to be. Please continue your good prayers! *** After I saw my parents and accountant, I headed to Lincoln to St. Michael's Church for a Mass celebrating the Legion of Mary. It was good to be with Bishop Conley and about a dozen brother priests for this Mass, along with about 100 Legion of Mary lay faithful from the Diocese. *** I had a busy, but fruitful, Monday!

Re-Cap on Divine Mercy Homily My homily last weekend included using a book by Vinny Flynn called

"Seven Secrets of Confession." In it, Flynn describes four barriers to receiving all of the love, forgiveness, healing, and restoration which God wants to provide us in Confession. The first barrier is "Lack of Faith." Like the people in the Gospel whose healings were attributed by Jesus to be because of their faith, so we must have faith that God can heal us in Confession. The second barrier is "Idolatry." Think outside of worshiping a golden calf, like the Israelites did in the Scriptures. Rather, our idols, according to Flynn, can be our jobs, our appearance, our social life or sporting events, or even our religious activities. Barrier #3 is "The Father Wound." We may carry wounds from our fathers—or mothers, teachers, priests, bosses—who have shown us anger, criticism, disapproval, ridicule, and this blocks God's love and mercy from fully reaching us in Confession. Finally, the fourth barrier identified is "Unforgiveness." This refers to the Lord's Prayer, where we ask God to forgive us our trespasses as we have forgiven others their trespasses. The key word is "as", such that our Confession may not heal and restore us—or even forgive our sins—if we have not forgiven others. I thought this list of barriers, from Mr. Flynn, and his entire book, are very insightful.

Wednesday in Lincoln On Wednesday, we celebrated the funeral Mass of Christian Burial for Father Melvin Rempe. Some of you may have crossed paths with Father Rempe while he was assigned in York. He helped out a great deal with the parish and school in York. He also did a lot of work at the Nebraska Women's Center, caring for and counseling incarcerated women. We had a beautiful Mass with Bishop Conley at the Cathedral, along with about 50 priests of the Diocese. Father Rempe's cousin is Father Jim Golka of Grand Island, who is currently the rector of the St. Mary's Cathedral. Father Golka preached a beautiful funeral homily. *** Prior to the funeral Mass, I attended a workshop from the Diocese about our new centralized payroll system. It is called Paycor; those of you who deal with payroll in the business world may be familiar with it. Paycor is used with great success by many Catholic dioceses across the country, and the Bishop decided that now was the time for our diocese to utilize such a system. Our parishes' secretary/bookkeeper, Diane Schleichardt, attended the workshop as well so that we both will have knowledge of how the new system works. Diane has worked with payroll previously in her career, and so I appreciate her gift in helping to implement Paycor in our parishes.

An Encouragement The April 4th edition of the News Register featured the new owners of the downtown Aurora coffee shop. I know this family pretty well, at least indirectly, through knowing the kolache baker mentioned in the article, Marilyn Haba. Marilyn and her husband, Lonnie, were (and are) parishioners at Our Lady of Assumption in Deweese. They were good friends to me during my eight years of serving the parishes of Lawrence and Deweese. And on multiple occasions, I was the beneficiary of Marilyn's excellent Czech baking, especially of kolaches. So, I wish the new owners, Sara (Haba) and Aaron Johnson much success, and I especially encourage you to try a kolache in their coffee shop!

God Bless You!

Father Grell