

From the Pastor—May 13, 2018

Grell On Gospel Jesus concludes his high priestly prayer in the Gospel of John today. He consecrates his disciples in the truth. I like how Our Lord says that the Father sent him into the world, and that he now sends the disciples into the world. And for this reason, he consecrates himself for them. Yes, the Father did send Jesus into the world. But the Father did not do that without first consecrating himself to Mary and her “yes” to the plan of salvation. Mary could have said “no”. The month of May gives us ample opportunity to think of this “Who’s Who?” in biblical consecrations: The Father to Mary at the Annunciation, Mary to the Holy Spirit at the Annunciation, the Holy Spirit to Jesus at his Baptism in the Jordan, and then Jesus to Mary at the wedding feast of Cana. In today’s Gospel, Jesus consecrates himself to us. What wonder and awe this should instill within us! These are lofty thoughts. But my point is this: the real recipient of all these consecrations is you, who hold this bulletin in your hands or read it on-line. And since Jesus concludes the Gospel passage by consecrating each of us in the truth, we do best by turning to Mary who never lived one speck of a moment of her thoughts, words, or actions outside of the truth of her Son. Prayerfully ask for yourself from the Lord a great realization of how he has consecrated himself to you, in truth.

My Anniversary! I was ordained a priest by Bishop Bruskewitz on May 25, 1996. We were a class of four: Father Thomas Brouillette (now assigned in Hastings; and from Hastings), Father John Birkel (Fairbury; David City), and Father Douglas Dietrich (Lincoln; Lincoln). In our diocese at ordinations, the candidates line up in alphabetical order. As a name beginning with “G”, I was last to be ordained! *** Those of you who celebrated with Father Marneni a couple of years ago his 25 years as a priest know that a priestly ordination anniversary is celebrated like a wedding anniversary. We priests take our “I do’s” to the Lord and his Church in a serious, yet celebratory way. *** Many of the priests who have served you and your families, either in the Lincoln Diocese or elsewhere, celebrate their ordination anniversaries in May or June. Pray in thanksgiving for our priestly vocations, and that we may continue to say “yes” to what the Lord calls us to do in the priesthood. *** In the recent Southern Nebraska Register which listed the annual clergy appointments, careful readers will note that I was not listed. So, I will happily begin year #23 of my priesthood with you all in St. Mary’s and St. Joseph’s!!! *** Let’s keep each other in close prayer and pray for continued growth in faith in these parish families of St. Mary’s and St. Joseph’s.

My Graduations I have graduated from school several times, due to the generous support of my parents and of you, the people of the Diocese of Lincoln. My high school graduation was on May 17, 1987, from Southern High School in Wymore. I remember our senior slide show, played to the pop song “Don’t You Forget About Me” by Simple Minds. I was a senior speaker, but I don’t remember what I said. I remember we had 38 kids in our class. I remember one member of our class who died from cancer, which was diagnosed during the pregnancy of her first child (RIP, +Shirley Giesler Ossowski). I remember singing a song with our choir, and grasping the hand of my

best friend, Brian Husa, as we sang. I don’t remember having a personal reception at our home or going together with classmates to rent a hall for a joint reception. *** My second graduation was from UN-L in 1991 with a Bachelor of Science in Agronomy (it was probably worded more fancy than that☺). I think I went through the commencement exercises at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, and I had a personal reception afterward at the apartment I lived in on Huntington Street, just north of East Campus in Lincoln. *** After five years in the seminary, there was no real graduation ceremony, at least not that I recall. Every seminarian receives what is called a “Master of Divinity (M.Div)” but this is not considered an academic degree. I tried to receive a Master of Arts in Moral Theology (which was not required). But to the chagrin of our seminary’s Academic Dean, I did not persevere. The graduation from seminary was, in essence, our ordination day. *** My fourth and last graduation (at least, I don’t anticipate going back to school) was a Master Degree of Educational Administration (M.EdAd) from the UN-L Teachers College. I received this in 2004, spending summers as a student-priest on campus and doing a lot of studying while stationed as pastor at Dwight and Bee. I remember the commencement exercises for this degree (at Devaney), and I enjoyed the curious glances from fellow graduates who noticed my Roman clerical collar underneath my graduation robe! *** The first two degrees (1987 and 1991) were the benefit mainly of my parents and taxpayers of Gage County; the latter two (1996 and 2004) were given through the Diocese of Lincoln, i.e. you as the people of God. Thank you to all who helped me! And thank you for reading this journey down memory lane!

GG, then AB OK, the first two letters stand for “Giltner Graduation”, which I attended last Sunday. I enjoyed seeing this class of 19 cross the stage. I was glad that it was a cool day, because I had become overheated at both the 8:30 and 10:30 Masses last weekend. I think my favorite part of Giltner’s graduation was when I noticed the kids who thanked not only their parents, but went out of their way to thank grandparents, other relatives, and teachers from Giltner Public Schools. *** Later that day, I went to the “Aurora Baccalaureate”, which was in the cool air-conditioned auditorium. The witness of these young people to the Gospel of Jesus Christ was over-the-top cool to me. We live in a faith-filled community, do we not? These graduates can teach all of us a lesson, especially that today’s youth are hungering for the Lord, and they can teach us “in the ministry” a thing or two about passionately preaching Jesus and his Holy Name.

Pilgrimage, Anyone? I am helping lead a pilgrimage August 1-5, this summer, with Spirit Catholic Radio. Here are some highlights of what you will see: the Grotto of the Redemption in West Bend, Iowa; the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, nestled in the bluffs just south of LaCrosse Wisconsin; the National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, near Green Bay, Wisconsin, where in 1859 the Virgin Mary appeared to a 28 year-old Belgian nun, Sr. Adele Brise; and the National Shrine of the Apostle Paul, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Go to spiritcatholicradio.com for more information.

God Bless You!

Father Grell