

From the Pastor—May 20, 2018

Grell On Gospel Is being truthful important to you? If so (and I hope it is!), Pentecost Sunday is a great celebration for you and all of us. For Jesus teaches in John chapter 15, one of the weekend's choices of Gospel reading, that when the Spirit of truth comes, he will lead us to all truth. The Holy Spirit is so near to us, so close to us, through our reception of Baptism and the other sacraments. Even when we feel alone or detoured from the path that leads to God, the Spirit of truth is ready at moment's notice to be called upon. An easy prayer to remember and say is "Come, Holy Spirit." Uttering this prayer, even if only whispered or in your heart, can unleash the great truth you are seeking, the truth of Jesus Christ and his love in your life.

Overheating I have a health history that I want/need to share with you. I have a strong tendency toward becoming overheated when I am wearing Mass vestments or cassock and surplice for other liturgical services. It is a complicated cross for me to deal with. Growing up, I was very accustomed to hot working conditions. Farm field work, mowing our lawn, and detasseling are just a few examples. As a high school kid, I worked up a sweat in basketball, track, and lifting weights. In all of these circumstances, I remember few times of becoming overcome by heat to the point of physical illness. I had flare-ups with migraine headaches, but I knew my mom had trouble with these and I was able to control the symptoms with over-the-counter medications. *** However, working in hot conditions while moving around and with a t-shirt and blue jeans or athletic gym shorts is a whole lot different from working in warm conditions while wearing layers of clothing and standing still. The latter describes what I do as a priest. *** Two of my previous parishes were not air-conditioned. I remember a wedding one time where the indoor temperature was 93 degrees. We ran a gazillion fans during all Masses. I begged brides not to select July or August dates for their wedding dates. And it wasn't just me—a groom-to-be once fainted at the wedding rehearsal the evening before his wedding. *** At these parishes, I suffered heat stroke. I don't know if it was ever diagnosed by this name, but it is what it was. And I still suffer from it, as I am told heat stroke becomes a part of one's life once you have suffered it. What happens at Holy Mass is this: I begin to notice my body temperature rising; I perspire; I begin to feel distressed and overly anxious; in extreme cases, when things have gone on a while, I begin to feel light-headed, dizzy, and a headache forms. After the Mass, I am tired and listless the rest of the day. I usually cool off by taking a shower, which helps, but the fatigue I feel is real. *** Over these first couple of weeks of May, I have experienced heat stroke symptoms. With the blessing of air conditioning in St. Mary's and St. Joseph's, I need to be watchful of where the thermostat is set. I need to keep air moving with fans. In some cases (maybe in many cases) my health need of remaining cool will conflict with the bodily thermometers of others in the congregation. Please be patient with me, and perhaps bring a sweater you can throw over your shoulders. I ask your prayers so that I can accommodate my recent health problems.

Ordination Weekend One of my greatest thrills in

my journey toward the priesthood was experiencing the weekend of ordinations. I once did a little research and found that our Lincoln Diocese has ordained at least one priest each year since 1979. Some years, the number has been as high as nine or ten new priests; the average seems to be around three or four. This is a great blessing—a profound and sublime blessing—to have enough seminarians to discern priesthood such that new priests join the diocese as older priests reach retirement age. Our blessing of ordinations to the priesthood has also allowed us to be generous with our priests, sending them to places like Venezuela (where my predecessor, Father John Keefe served), to Rome to work for the Holy Father (as two of our priests do currently), to Washington, D.C. to work for the Church of the United States (as two of our priests do currently), or to go on for further studies, such as canon law or philosophy. *** So for our Diocese, ordinations are celebrated, and the regularity of having new priests and deacons each year helps us to celebrate well these great blessings of young men to serve the Lord. For me as a seminarian, seeing a full cathedral in Lincoln, with overflow congregants in the church basement some years, was impactful. *** The point I want to share is that ALL of you are invited to share the joy. You do not have to personally know any of the men being ordained; it is a diocesan-wide celebration. The events include on May 24, a holy hour to pray for the men being ordained—this happens at the Newman Center on UN-L's campus at 7:00 p.m. On Friday, May 25th, three young men will be ordained deacons at the Cathedral of the Risen Christ at 7:00 p.m. One of these men may be familiar to some in our area; his name is Tony Bedient and he is a native of York, NE. (And by the way, Tony's story is amazing. He was married to a beautiful young woman named Jessica. Jessica was from Ashland. In their second **month** of marriage, their car was struck by a drunk driver in west Omaha; Jessica died in the accident. Tony recovered and made the remarkable discernment to become a priest.) On Saturday, May 26th, two young men will be ordained as priests. One of them, Deacon Doug Daro, was a student of mine at Aquinas Catholic Schools in David City. So, Doug makes me a very proud father! *** I wish our parish had a bus and I could load up many of you and take you to these ordination events. I especially think that if our young men of middle school, high school, and college age were to see an ordination, they would be drawn to consider the priesthood. I would love it if some of you could spontaneously invite some of our young men, or your own sons, and go to ordinations this weekend.

Mom on Mother's Day To update you on my parents, they are doing well. I was not able to visit my mom on Mother's Day; I did have a very nice phone call with her. Dad has been back at home now for a month, after spending five months at the Good Samaritan facility recovering from his hip fracture. My sister had a graduation for one of her and Bob's nephews in Emerson, NE, and so our whole family could not have been together for Mother's Day. Mary and Mark both called Mom. My parents are enjoying being together, sharing time and meals, and going to Mass—all of their normal activities. Our family is so appreciative of your prayers. It was probably a bittersweet Mother's Day for my sister, not

having Bob to share in their parenting of William. Please continue to pray for Bob's soul, and for Mary and Will as they get along without their husband/father.

Pilzno Funeral Mass When I speak of "Pilzno," I imagine a good share of you haven't heard of this beautiful parish in our York Deanery. It is officially St. Mary's Parish, and it has an Osceola "street" address. Pilzno is where Father Mark Cyza of our Diocese comes from. Father Cyza is currently stationed as a priest in Nebraska City and runs the Lourdes Central Catholic School there as well as pastoring St. Benedict Church. Father Cyza's dad died a couple of weeks ago. The funeral was at Pilzno, and I was able to go. It was a beautiful funeral Mass for Mr. Ron Cyza, who had suffered for almost two decades with Parkinson's. The Cyza brothers had run a gravel/sand business from the nearby supply along the Platte River basin and valley, south of the Columbus area. You can understand why the Polish settlers of Pilzno wanted their church and cemetery built where they did, because the area has stunning beauty. Both Bishop Conley and Bishop Bruskewitz were at the funeral, as well as about 40 of us priests. The church is tiny; the priests and immediate family filled about 2/3 of the church, with overflow watching on a video camera feed. After the funeral Mass, at which Father Mark preached very well, we loaded Mr. Cyza's casket upon his 1974 Ford pick-up truck, per his wishes. The pick-up was carefully driven by a grandson to the cemetery, which is on the parish grounds but about a football field distance away from church. Father Cyza is the only boy in the family, with six sisters. They are all married and have kids. It was truly a beautiful day, even though a gathering in sorrow. We priests are all brothers, and so what Father Mark lacked as a child he stated he was glad to have so many brothers now in his priesthood. The priest at St. Vincent's in Osceola serves the Pilzno parish. There was once a resident pastor at Pilzno, and, in fact, we priests vested in the old rectory. *** If you ever want a great Sunday drive in the country, Pilzno is straight north of Osceola a bit east, and is only about an hour from Aurora.

Aurora Graduation I was happy to attend my first Aurora graduation. I was told it was a small class, but it seemed large to me based on my own high school and most of the towns I have served as a priest. The music provided by the band and choir, which I know Aurora is noted for, was very beautiful and set the mood for this profound moment in our young people's lives. I enjoyed the efficiency of the ceremony itself, and the content was arranged very well. One of the senior speakers was parishioner, Kristen McCoy, who many of you have seen grow up in our parish. She did very well! And when the students in the top tier academically were recognized, I was impressed with the number of kids from our parish. The superintendent of schools gave motivating words to the students, quoting Sacred Scripture and exhorting the young people to pray. If you were at graduation, I was there, but I kind of slipped in and slipped out without lingering. Please know that I enjoyed being remembered and invited to personal receptions.

"Rowing" Crops I was so excited on Ascension Thursday when I drove to Giltner for St. Joseph's evening Mass, because I could "row" the crops! I was taught this

term from my dad, when the sprouts of the germinated crops sufficiently had broken through the crust to be able to see a row all the way down the field as you drove past. In fact, I traveled that evening to Giltner via Highway 14, and I drove past the corner to turn west on the blacktop to Giltner...I was crop-gazing too much, apparently! Please know of my prayers for our farmers in the fields, for livestock (perhaps moved to pasturelands or contained in feedlots), for gardens getting going, and for lawns and that your mowers are working well! We have been blessed with some rain, so it is good to see green more and more after the long winter of coldness.

Living Liturgically Pope Francis made a major addition to the church calendar earlier this year. In fact, it is so major and new that our church calendars given to you at Christmas time and our church bulletin did not have enough notice to include the new celebration. The feast will be celebrated this year and subsequent years on the day after Pentecost. It is called, "The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church." According to Magnificat, this memorial is described like this: *"Jesus' most solemn words are spoken from the cross. In entrusting his Mother Mary to the Beloved Disciple, our Lord is concerned for much more than her practical living arrangements: he establishes a relationship between his holy Mother and all who are united to him, that is, the Church. We, too, behold our Mother, for she is the Mother of all who live the new life of grace. We turn to her, especially, when we experience the cross, knowing she is "standing by." **** The Collect (Opening Prayer) for the Mass on this day has been written by the Church as follows: "O God, Father of mercies, whose Only Begotten Son, as he hung upon the Cross, chose the Blessed Virgin Mary, his Mother, to be our Mother also, grant, we pray, that with her loving help your Church may be more fruitful day by day and, exulting in the holiness of her children, may draw to her embrace all the families of the peoples. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen"

Spiritual Bouquet for Bishop Conley Attached to this bulletin is an opportunity for us to pray for Bishop Conley on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of his ordination as a bishop. His Excellency was named a bishop by Pope Benedict XVI in 2008; at the time, he was serving the Church as a priest of the Wichita Diocese. His first assignment as a bishop was to be an auxiliary (like an assistant) bishop in the Archdiocese of Denver. (Large dioceses like Denver often have one or more auxiliary bishops.) Bishop Conley served in Denver until 2012, when he was named our bishop to replace the retiring Bishop Bruskewitz. We as a Diocese are offering Bishop Conley a spiritual bouquet. You will see on the form that you can enter a certain number of prayers or offerings for the Bishop's intentions. I need these offering returned from you so that I can forward them as a whole to Father Rayer. I need them by May 25 to send to Father Rayer by May 26. You can give the sheet back to me as you read it before Mass at St. Mary's this weekend, or after Mass at St. Joseph's this weekend.

God Bless You!

Father Grell