

From the Pastor—June 17, 2018

One Year! This week on Tuesday marks my one-year anniversary of being pastor of St. Mary's in Aurora and St. Joseph's in Giltner. Having the first year "under my belt" is important to me. It means that I have seen the ebb and flow of one year, the complete cycle of the liturgical calendar and the complete cycle of what makes our parishes the wonderful places which they are. Please offer a little prayer for me on Tuesday to mark thanksgiving to God for my first year, and for graces upon us all as I begin my second year with you.

Eucharistic Procession We had a Eucharistic procession on the feast of Corpus Christi (the Body and Blood of Jesus) on Sunday, June 3, after the 8:30 a.m. Mass. It was beautiful! At the end of Holy Mass, rather than the final blessing and dismissal ("Go forth, the Mass is ended"), we exposed the Blessed Sacrament into the monstrance. Then, led by incense bearer, candle bearers, and cross bearer, I took Jesus in the monstrance and walked down the main aisle. People began following behind Jesus and me, as they were directed to. Several of our First Holy Communion class members provided an honor guard to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. We went outside to the parking lot and toward the east, toward the front door of the rectory. There, the first altar was set up, with flowers and candles. I placed the monstrance upon the altar and we prayed silently. I then gave a short fervorino about the gift of faith and recited the Act of Faith. I gave benediction (blessing) with the monstrance with the Sacred Host. Jesus then went to the second outdoor altar, which was placed on the lawn at the front door of parishioners Tom and Kim Wanek. Again, we prayed silently in front of the Blessed Sacrament, I upon a kneeler and all else standing. I gave a short talk on the gift of hope, and then recited the Act of Hope. The second benediction was held and we started toward the third altar. In our crossing of P Street (the east-west street which borders the north end of our parish plant), parishioners helped make sure that any oncoming traffic was aware of our procession, keeping us safe. The third altar was at the former entrance to our church, where Our Lady, Handmaid of the Lord, now stands, along with the benches and beautiful floral and plant arrangement. We prayed at this third altar for the gift of love, and then I recited the Act of Love. I gave the third benediction. We recited the Divine Praises ("Blessed be God, Blessed be His Holy Name, etc."). Then, we sang "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name" as I and the servers processed with Jesus back into church. People were free to depart from there. *** It was truly a wonderful day, as we walked with Jesus. It showed our love for Jesus in His True Presence. The procession ended around 10:10 a.m., so I was late in getting on the road and arriving at St. Joseph's for Holy Mass. I hope all understand my lateness. *** Thank you to all who helped with the procession, most especially the setting up of the three outdoor altars.

My Retreat I was scheduled to report to my annual retreat on Sunday evening, June 3rd. I wasn't feeling well, so I received permission to stay home and rest; I checked in on Monday morning. The retreat lasted through Thursday evening. It was wonderful; thank you to all who prayed for me! I and about 50 other priests

gathered for prayer and fellowship at Our Lady of Good Counsel Retreat Center, near Waverly, located on 112th Road just south of Interstate 80. The retreat master was Father John Riccardo of the Archdiocese of Detroit. He is a familiar voice to those who listen to Catholic radio, with his program "Christ is the Answer". He has also written one book that I know of. Father Riccardo's main thrust of meditation for us was upon the Book of Romans from St. Paul, focusing upon chapters 5-8. In these chapters, St. Paul proclaims boldly the authority of Jesus Christ to defeat sin, death, and the evil one. In fact, Father Riccardo emphasized how these words are capitalized: Sin, Death, the Evil One. The kingdom of this world is that of the Devil, the fallen Angel and his minions. What Our Lord Jesus did upon the Cross was to give Himself freely over to the horrific death he suffered so as to defeat the Devil, the Prince of Death. Jesus baited the Evil One, so to speak, luring him to come ever nearer to the Cross. When the death of the Lord happened, and His subsequent Resurrection, the Evil One knew he had been defeated. The Evil One saw Jesus as God in a way that he in his wile and deceit had not for sure known before this. Our great benefit, we who are baptized into Christ, is that we are given the assurance of victory over Sin and Death and the Princely Power of the Evil One. We through our faithful clinging and adoration of Jesus can grasp the crucifix and "stare down" the Devil and defeat his attempts upon luring us into his weave of Lies and Evil. The bottom line: Jesus Christ is King, the absolute winner over Sin, Death, and the Devil...this is **Good News!** *** This is the takeaway lesson I received, among others, from Father John Riccardo. I invite you to go the parish web site where Father Riccardo serves in the Detroit Archdiocese, in Plymouth, Michigan: www.olgcp parish.net/. Under the "Media" tab on the home page, you can find a vast array of audio and video productions in which Father Riccardo uses his amazing gifts and love for the Church to grow people's relationship with Jesus Christ.

Sacred Heart in Lawrence Last Sunday, my former parish in Lawrence, Sacred Heart, celebrated its 125th anniversary of being founded. Holy Mass was held with Bishop James Conley; I could not attend that, but I was able to go to the dinner after the Mass. It was wonderful to see so many of the faces of folks who I was shepherd to for eight years, 2005-2013. I drove to Lawrence going cross country from Giltner after the 10:30 a.m. Mass at St. Joseph's; it was a 39-mile trip. I enjoyed cutting through the first part of my journey going directly south of Giltner without use of GPS or maps. I knew in general where I needed to be, and when I entered Clay County, the road signs became familiar to me as points of reference. I eventually came to Highway 6, and then went south through Bunker Hill toward Spring Ranch. By that time, I knew exactly where I was at. I entered Nuckolls County and excitedly drove the remaining four miles to arrive at Sacred Heart. It was a joyful day!

Bird Sanctuary My goal of setting up bird feeders is coming true! At the rectory back door, and along the south face of the rectory, many birds are giving me enjoyment as I see them and hear them chirping. It is fun!

God Bless You!

Father Grell