

From the Pastor—June 24, 2018

Compliments Thank you for the complimentary words that you enjoy what I write in this column. I am very grateful to have this opportunity, and to know that people actually read what I write! My enjoyment of writing is almost hobby-like. I don't really do a lot of things that Nebraskans like to do: hunt, fish, snow ski, water ski, golf, camp out, jog/run. But I do enjoy writing, so I feel blessed to have this space and to know that your eyes are passing over my words. I hope my writing helps us all to live and love Jesus better and better—I dedicate my writing to him. He only be praised!

News Register Note Each month, the Aurora News Register prints the local churches and their service times and contact information. This ad comes also with a message written by one of the local ministers. My turn came up this month, and the past week's issue had my write-up! I am blessed to have been asked to write, and I pray that hearts are lifted to Jesus by what I wrote.

Rainy Skies I hope our area farmers are getting rainfall in good amounts and not heavy with hail or winds. Did you see video of the flash flood that swept through McCook this past week? Yikes, I don't know that area of our State well, but it looked scary. Closer to my home area, two little towns named Reynolds and Thompson in Jefferson County received 7-8 inches of rain. These towns are not too far away from our older of two Grell farmsteads. We have a farm passed on through the family which my great-grandpa purchased in 1883. That farm sits in southwestern Gage County, only about two miles from the Jefferson County line. My parents went and looked at our crops there after the huge rain, and things looked ok. Nebraska weather always leaves one looking to the skies and wondering what's next! I do appreciate the cooling off of temperature, but I know that heat will probably soon be back. And, indeed, we need the abundant sunlight for our crops and gardens to fill out during this vegetative growth time.

Liturgical Oddity Last week was the Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, and next week is the Thirteenth Sunday. What happened to the Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time? Liturgically, we celebrate today the Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist. This solemnity is deemed by the Church to be so significant as to take precedence over the Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time. The white vestments will be worn to show the holiness of St. John the Baptist's birth. The readings will focus upon him in an appropriate way. It is especially cool to me to celebrate this feast day, as John the Baptist is my Confirmation patron saint! As a child, I liked to think of him wearing a leather cloth and eating grasshoppers and wild locusts. As an adult, I see his total giving over of his life for Jesus to be so impactful upon me. He was the friend of the bridegroom, Jesus. In one passage, John the Baptist from prison sends his disciples to Jesus and has them ask, "Are you he who is to come, or do we expect another?" John the Baptist was pretty sure that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, but he phrased his question very humbly and trustfully. In doing so, he showed he was willing to be patient, and his prison term (and impending execution) showed he was willing that his time of preaching not show the fruits of a worldly glorification of him.

Father Nicodemus and Envelopes Last weekend, we had the Mission Coop preacher, Father Nicodemus from Kenya. The envelope with which you can use to give toward his mission efforts arrived this week at your homes in our usual packets of envelopes, received every other month via U.S. Postal Service. It is green in color; you may give to Father Nicodemus' mission either in the green envelope or the one we are inserting into this week's bulletin. Next year, the Mission Coop envelope will be removed from the packet so as to ensure that the timing of receiving it coincides with the actual visit of the missionary. *** I know that Father's accent was difficult at times to understand. His homily was excellent about the sower sowing the seed and waiting for the fruit to come forth. It was a great homily for our Mission trip youth to hear before they set out on their missionary experience last Sunday. I liked the way in his preaching style that he said, "Oh, yes!" to emphasize a point. If you caught his words, he pointed out that he and one assistant priest are charged with covering 29 mission stations, totaling 2,000 people. By point of reference, he mentioned that the mission stations could be as far away as Sutton or York. He said that priests of his diocese do not have cars; they ride by motorbikes on dirt roads to get to their mission stations. In a conversation with Father Nicodemus and several other priests, we spoke about the tradition of the Kenyan people being good runners. He shared that he can run one kilometer in three minutes, or a 10K run in 30 minutes. That's impressive! Father Nicodemus will trek across the Diocese some time more, as he is scheduled to visit parishes in York, Bellwood, Dwight, Presentation, Brainard, and Center (David City).

I-80 Collar Series I attended, but did not play in, the I-80 Collar Series. Over 4,000 people were in attendance at Haymarket Park in Lincoln. It was like a big Catholic festival! Concessions were being sold, t-shirts were being catapulted into the crowd (along with an occasional water balloon), and the on-site playground was used by kids and watchful moms. Our Lincoln priests were defeated 20-18 by the Omaha Archdiocese. It was a six-inning game. Each inning lasted for exactly 10 batters, rather than the customary three outs. Bishop James Conley was one of our two Lincoln pitchers; he recorded a couple of putouts and pitched well. The Bishop led the priests from both dioceses, and the fans, in singing the Salve Regina (Hail Holy Queen) and giving us all his apostolic blessing. In this and many other ways, this was not your ordinary game. How often do you see the jumbotron scoreboard featuring messages from bishops and priests to promote vocations? *** I enjoyed the game very, very much, talking with many friends who I don't see on a regular basis. Many pictures of the game are on our diocesan web site, lincolndiocese.org. The fifth annual game will move back to Omaha next year, with our Lincoln Diocese holding a 3-1 edge in wins.

Notetaker volunteer? Is there anyone in our parishes who could volunteer to take notes at meetings? We need to record accurately what is discussed at both St. Mary's and St. Joseph's. It would be great to have one notetaker to cover both parishes.

God Bless You!

Father Grell