

## **From the Pastor—July 8, 2018**

**Will's Birthday** My nephew, Will, turned 15 last Sunday. We had a birthday dinner for him at The Oven, which is a favorite restaurant of his in the Haymarket area of Lincoln. It is my brother's favorite restaurant, too, and is located directly beside the office where he works. I think I have mentioned, but it merits repeating, that Will is adopted. The adoption is "open" on the side of his birth-dad but "closed" per his birth-mom. Will's birth-dad, Dave, was at the dinner, as was Dave's mom (Will's birth-grandma), Barb. They both live in the Omaha metro area. My sister herself was unable to attend the dinner, as she felt just horrible that day, with something like a 24-hour bug. So, there we were as a somewhat odd quintet of people: a 15-year old birthday boy, his two uncles, and his birth dad and grandma. The gathering was fun, as we have come to know and love Will's birth family over the years. Will loves the spicy, Indian food that The Oven serves. I think the hottest spice he tried is called "lava dust"—oh my, that is way beyond my limits! Mary, my sister, did have a little bit of birthday cake with Will after the dinner. I didn't stay for the cake. It is convenient for me when I go to Lincoln to only go as far as the Haymarket since that is on "this side" of town, whereas Mary lives in the 70<sup>th</sup> and A Streets vicinity of Lincoln. This, of course, was Will's first birthday since his dad Bob's death last October. We kind of tiptoed around this topic, not knowing really how much Will in his teenage heart and mind wanted his dad talked about. \*\*\* Will's adoption "pick-up" day was on the Fourth of July in 2003. William was born on July 1 in North Platte, and Dave and the birth-mom officially decided on July 3 to place him in an adoptive home. Mary and Bob had gone through the Nebraska Children's Home to file for adoption, completing a mound of paperwork, with plenteous social worker visits, along the way. They were hopeful that the day would come when a baby would be theirs, but they didn't know when it would happen. When they received the call on July 3 and were told to be in North Platte on July 4, it made that year's Independence Day unforgettable for us all. I was in Denver on vacation at the time with my priest-friend, Father Matthew. As Mary, Bob, and Mark drove to North Platte from Lincoln, Father Matthew and I drove there from Denver. The priest from North Platte's Lincoln Diocese parish, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, met us at the hospital and prayed a special prayer as the exchange was made from birth family to our family. The priest was Father Tom Brouillette, who is my classmate in ordination year of 1996, so his presence made the emotional moment all the more special. That was truly a July 4<sup>th</sup> to remember!

**My 4<sup>th</sup>** A very nice number of you came to the Fourth of July Mass at St. Mary's. Thank you for coming and praying for our country and for your own needs! I preached a little about Archbishop John Carroll, the first bishop in these United States. His message from a homily in 1791 applied so well to us today. The Archbishop spoke of being faithful to the Cross, the Altar, and the bread and wine which allow us to "do this in memory" of Jesus; and then to act as Jesus did, bringing Christ's love and peace to family and friends. The Archbishop spoke of this being "our" country, that we are not foreigners here. \*\*\* With the heat of July, I preferred not to go out too far on the Fourth.

I did drive around Aurora a little bit; perhaps I waved at you! It was fun just to pass through some neighborhood streets to see how people were celebrating. I watched some Royals baseball and parts of the PBS Independence Day special from the Mall in Washington, D.C. That was fun to see! I also had a good phone conversation with my Virginia priest-friend, Father Matthew.

**New and Newly Placed** St. Mary's and St. Joseph's have a couple of differences to our physical plant that are of interest. \*\*\* At St. Mary's, we have two brand new refrigerator/freezers in the kitchen. I have been told that these units had been spoken of since the 2014 church and hall expansion project. One of the two units previously sitting there recently went out due to many years of usage. While a commercial unit had been considered, the Parish Council was more in favor of this purchase made through Schneider's Hardware. Take a peak inside the kitchen some time if you want to see these handsome, new, stainless steel-fronted, double refrigerator/freezers! Also, the black keyboard piano in St. Mary's Church is now on a "piano dolly" which allows it to be easily rolled to differing angles to enhance our music ministry. This item came from Yanda's Music out of Kearney. \*\*\* At St. Joseph's, the bells to announce that Mass is beginning have been moved from the sacristy room off of the sanctuary to the entry area of church by the holy water fonts. These bells will be rung to signal the procession of the Cross, priest, and ministers while the opening hymn is sung. We also at St. Joseph's have added a stand-up mike to the front organ area, which will aid our cantor and musician in leading us in adoration of Jesus at Holy Mass.

**"My" Birds** The bird feeders at the rectory have been attracting a steady population of hungry (not angry) birds! It is fun for me to see all the activity of these little creatures of God. I have no desire for an indoor pet at this point of my life; growing up on the farm, we only had kitties and dogs as exclusively outdoor inhabitants of the barn and other out-buildings. But having these birds close by my rectory so I can look out and see them is very enjoyable to me; they are like pets to me!

**Friends Dropping By** In the past month or so, I have had several former friends from past parishes drop by and see me. Some have called ahead, others have been unexpected. It is a neat experience for me, because my last two parishes of Plattsmouth and Lawrence were off the beaten path and therefore not conducive for people to drop by. You may see me chatting with these folks from time-to-time on their visits.

**Steve Ray at St. Leo's** Steve Ray is a regular Catholic speaker, author, tour guide, and evangelist. Plan to see Steve Ray at St. Leo's Church in Grand Island on Saturday, July 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 p.m. You are asked to purchase tickets to this event at SpiritCatholicRadio.com. The cost is \$5 per person.

**Humanae vitae** This Latin title, rendered "On Human Life," is approaching its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of release. See the January meditation and prayer from Humanae vitae on the reverse side of this sheet.

**God Bless You!**

**Father Grell**