

## **From the Pastor—September 2, 2018**

**New Trustee** Each parish in the diocese is required to have two lay trustees. Until I became a priest, I had no idea what a trustee did, only that the position sounded important. \*\*\* I want to welcome a new trustee for St. Mary's. Before I introduce the new trustee, I would like to express appreciation and admiration for our outgoing trustee. She is Deanie (Mrs. Tom) Wanek. My priest-predecessors have told me of her loyal, dedicated service to St. Mary's congregation for a number of years. I think Deanie's service as trustee can be described in terms of decades rather than years. She and Tom continue to be caretakers of the church, locking up and opening the doors when I am away. It is people like Deanie, and Tom, and many of you reading this in our parishes of St. Mary's and St. Joseph's, who make parishes in our Diocese of Lincoln provide great witness to the faith we have in Jesus. The Church simply could not exist without the ordered parish structure and the people, like you, who serve the Lord and His Church "on the front lines" of parish life. Thank you all, most graciously, and I personally thank Deanie for her service. \*\*\* Saying "yes" to my invitation to serve as our new trustee is Diann (Mrs. Robert) Clay. Diann is a reader at Mass for St. Mary's, and she is active in the Altar Society. She and Bob are familiar faces around the parish. I am looking forward to working with Diann and I am thankful for her "yes". \*\*\* It seems to be the custom of St. Mary's and St. Joseph's to have one male and one female serving as trustees. To that end, the other trustee for St. Mary's is Ron Elge, and he is continuing in this role. The trustees for St. Joseph's are Ron Consbruck and Linda Hoffman. I thank these returning trustees. \*\*\* For those of you who enjoy perusing rules and regulations, and/or procedural matters, here is an excerpt of how the Diocese views the role of trustees (taken from the Synod in 1996): *Each parish and diocesan institution shall be separately incorporated in accordance with the appropriate statutes of the State of Nebraska. The status as a non-profit corporation shall be kept current by filing the annual report required by the Secretary of State. The corporation board of each parish and diocesan institution consists of the following members: the Bishop of the Diocese (ex officio President); the Vicar General of the Diocese; the pastor; and two lay members. The two lay members of the corporation board shall be selected and nominated each year by the pastor. The Bishop will then appoint these two persons as trustees for the corporation. There is no set term of office for the lay trustees. [editorially skipping ahead to a slightly different topic]...Each parish is to have a Finance Council. The Finance Council may be a sub-committee of the Parish Council or may be fulfilled by the trustees of the parish. The Finance Council shall assist the pastor in arranging proper financial management and maintenance of the parish.*

**Serving for Life?** I have been a pastor in medium sized parishes and small parishes; and I have been an assistant pastor in large parishes. Whatever the size, volunteers are always precious, and sometimes scarce. I have noticed fear in people to step forward in faith as a volunteer, because they think that their "yes" is forever. I have two viewpoints to explain how I view "terms", or length of service, as volunteers in parish life. On the one

hand, the person serving (in roles large or small, noticeable or hidden) may see his or her volunteerism as a lifeline and something desirous of doing indefinitely. On the other hand, the person serving (again, in roles large or small, noticeable or hidden) may enjoy the love of service but may know that a change in life will take place soon...such as a new baby or grandchild, a new job, moving to a new parish, an illness, or growing slower in mind and/or body. In either case, as pastor, I mainly want from those who serve a joy in serving and not to feel that they are being "put upon" or burdened. At the same time, I would not want those who serve to feel guilty into serving, like a negative peer pressure from myself as pastor or by fellow parishioners. If I seem disappointed when someone tells me "no" for volunteering, that is my problem, not yours. \*\*\* A distinct view is this: it seems one ought never to feel like we have done enough in serving the parish. Our parish is a family; we serve our family out of love; can we ever love too much? \*\*\* To begin to wrap up this thought, I think we can have times to say "yes" and times to say "no" to serving our parish family. To be sure, serving invests us. We all have experienced the way our hearts surge when we are involved, when we are listened to, when we are included in activities. We feel the opposite way, so often, when we are excluded, not listened to, or feel not among the "in" crowd. I desire for everyone, EVERYONE, to feel a part of our community, no matter your life situation, no matter how much (or how little) you may feel that you volunteer. When we gather in prayer for Holy Mass, that is where the real power of our congregation is shown. Our unity around the altar is a work of grace that any one of us, alone, cannot match in generous love-giving to God. \*\*\* Bottom line I want to express is this: a healthy turnover of volunteers is good for a parish. I think we have shown this in CCD staffing and Godteens this past year. St. Mary's has a new trustee and a new Altar Society President from when I came; the Knights of Columbus have a new Grand Knight. Those who feel called to serve more, or less, you all are dear souls to Our Lord, and you ought always to pray for how, where, and when God next wants you to serve. \*\*\* I didn't expect this to be such a long note when I started writing...hope it makes sense to you!

**Learning, Loving, Living...Jesus!** This is our theme, our battle cry, for our youth in the parishes of St. Mary's and St. Joseph's this year. The reverse of this sheet lists those volunteers who are assisting our families in the religious education of our precious youth. Our overall number of youth participating is up a little from last year. Twenty years from now, these same youth could (and will) be our CCD teachers, Altar Society presidents, Grand Knights, or on the Parish Council ☺. We love them, and we love you dear families who step out in faith to welcome new life!

**Catholic Radio** An interesting question came in to Dr. David Anders this week, on his 1:00-2:00 p.m. show—can a godparent's name be removed from a person's sacramental record? He was not definitive, saying to ask a canon lawyer. I *think* the answer is "no", as usually the sacramental records cannot be changed.

**God Bless You!**

**Father Grell**