

From the Pastor—August 19, 2018

A Different Way In my 22+ years as a priest, the first 20 involved being a teacher or an administrator in our Catholic schools in the diocese. During those years, I enjoyed preparing my lessons, looking over the roster of students assigned to me, and attending in-services and informational meetings with the faculty. As an administrator, I looked forward to helping the faculty and welcoming new families through tours of our school. I guess you could say that I had a sort of “high” in the busyness and get-to-work of all that involves beginning a new school year. So, as I see our students and families in these parishes begin a new school year, and as I see the many of you who are on staff in our local schools, I hope you can understand that I experience an emptiness from what I have been accustomed to for most of my priesthood. It doesn't mean that I am upset by there not being a Catholic school here; it just means it requires a different mode of behavior on my part to adjust to being with you all here. I hope I don't show a sadness, but please know that I have a vested interest in the new school year because of my past experience and that I am accompanying you all in prayer as the new school chugs into beautiful motion. It is special to begin a new school year, and I want to wish all of you well in your endeavors to get things started on the right foot. God Bless You!

Our CCD Kick-Off Wow, we have a grand number of families and students in grades K-8 in our St. Mary's and St. Joseph's parishes! We met last Wednesday to begin the 2018-2019 school, and every round table in the St. Mary's Hall was full of parents and students. I wish I would have gotten a picture of all of you! I addressed the entire group, and then our coordinator, Alison Morrow did housekeeping announcements and welcomed families and our volunteer teachers, and then the students went to the classrooms for a brief meet-and-greet with their teacher. We all attended Holy Mass. So, the new year is here! I believe we may still have a family or two who will yet register their students; I will provide final numbers when they become clearer. I am so grateful for you dear families and dear volunteer CCD staff.

Godteens Kick-Off on August 22 Our Godteens will kick-off the new school year this Wednesday, August 22, with a cook-out. Please contact coordinator, Molly Elge, for more information about it. We also have a Twitter account just for the Godteens: @stmarysgodteens. As with my note above, I am so grateful for the families who support Godteens and for the volunteer Godparents who serve our youth. If you want your child/ren to be involved, please prayerfully consider signing them up by contacting Molly.

Welcome to New Housekeeper! We welcome St. Mary's parishioner, Judy Orcutt, to the housekeeping position for the St. Mary's/St. Joseph's rectory. Your priest is looking forward to her able assistance in upkeeping the rectory, both for myself and future priests who will live here. It is a beautiful rectory that you parishes are providing for your priest, and it is deserving of the TLC (tender loving care) that a housekeeper provides. Welcome, Judy!

Parents/Siblings of New College Students Oh my...I know—I know—I know how tough it is for families to

send off their young adults to college. For parents, it is a letting go and seeing your youth mature even more than they have in high school. For younger brothers and sisters still at home, it means the absence of that older sibling that you perhaps took for granted. For the young people themselves enrolling in college, it involves mixed emotions as you begin a whole new way of life, with lots of freedom, lots of exciting encounters with new people, and, for some, quite a bit of homesickness. With all of these situations in mind, please know of my prayers, and that I totally get (in some sense) what you are experiencing.

The Beatrice “Six” With my growing up near Beatrice, I thought you might find it interesting to hear about the famed Beatrice Six who are much in the news in recent times. These six were convicted and jailed for a murder which they did not commit. The true assailant was later identified, after the “Six's” conviction and jailing, by DNA testing. He died in another state, but had gotten in trouble for some crime and served time for that. The injustice dealt to the Beatrice Six has led to a huge (around \$29 million) lawsuit against Gage County. I don't intend to speak to the specifics of the case. But I remember vividly when the murder took place. Helen Wilson, an elderly woman, died in the attack against her. She lived just a couple of blocks south of St. Joseph Church in Beatrice. I was a sophomore at Wymore Southern at the time, and it shook me to the core to think that Beatrice had had a murder occur in town. I think my parents knew/know some relatives of Ms. Wilson who still live in the area. It is a sad situation for this famed “Six”.

Pastoral Planning As I adjust and get my feet more firmly planted among you all, here are some announcements of note.

New Missals and Hymnbooks in One After speaking with our parish musicians of St. Mary's and St. Joseph's, we are going to introduce the combined hymnal and missalette from Oregon Catholic Press (OCP) called “Breaking Bread”. Our musicians had mixed feelings, but mostly supportive, about this change. It means that one book will cover the entire year of Sunday and Holy Day Masses. The separate missalette, currently from World Library Publication, JS Paluch Company, will no longer be the guide for Mass readings and prayers; these will all be in the Breaking Bread worship aid. Yes, it will be a change; some will like it, others will not. Please know it was a decision that I felt best and that I ask your cooperation in the transition, beginning this Advent.

New Hours at St. Joseph's I have asked our St. Joseph caretakers to leave the church open during daylight hours. My goal is that people during the day can stop in and pray in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. On the way to the elevator or bank, on the way to a noon meal or the Community center, before or after school...all of these situations and more are times that I want for you to have access to Sweet Jesus in the tabernacle. I realize that open doors could lead to people abusing the privilege and not being prayerful inside; but I think we can trust small-town watchfulness and keep our church a haven of silence and prayer for all of us.

Acolytes to the Homebound At my last parish, we had a wonderful group of Acolytes who helped me take Holy Communion to the homebound. I would like to ask

the St. Mary's and St. Joseph's Acolytes to consider prayerfully if they could assist me with our local homebound. Perhaps this has been done in the past. Currently, I visit the Memorial Health Care and the Westfield Quality Care (former Hamilton Manor) every Friday morning. I gather the Catholics in the chapel and we have a short Communion service. I also visit the hospitalized on Fridays. But I have seen a great need for a number of our parishioners who have had surgeries, or are battling various declines in health, and I need help to reach out to them all. Probably on average, there are at least four to five people in this category, who just can't make it to church on Sundays. This could be anywhere from a farmhouse, to the Villages of Hampton, Giltner, or Marquette, or to homes right here in Aurora. The Acolytes would need to be available for me to place the Blessed Sacraments in their pyx (the container to take Holy Communion to the homebound). The Acolytes would need to be given the set of prayers they say when they arrive at the home of the parishioners. It would also be helpful if a volunteer in the parish could arrange on Thursdays to call the homebound for the visit of the Acolytes on Fridays. The visits would begin around 8:30 a.m. Those who wish to receive the Acolytes' visit would need to contact the parish, as I might not know everyone who is homebound. Please, pray that this outreach can bring Jesus to all.

High School Altar Servers Most parishes I have been assigned to, and many other parishes that I have direct knowledge of, provide the opportunity for young men to serve all through their high school years. We have several young men in St. Mary's and St. Joseph's who are serving in this way. But we have need of larger-sized cassocks for some of the high school youth to serve. I want to begin this high school serving, and I will need the support of families with high school young men. To you young men: I hope you will see this as a great way to show the younger, elementary boys that serving Jesus is a cool and sublime privilege. When I can order the bigger-sized cassocks, I will organize a server practice for all servers, as I need to go over some of the unique ways that I ask of young men to serve at the altar. Please pray for the success of high school serving.

Ladies First! Last Sunday, among our youth at coffee and rolls, I asked for a "ladies first" through the doughnut line. My aim here is what you might call a little "chivalry". The young men have to realize the grace and beauty of giving the young ladies priority, such as they might learn by opening doors or carrying books for them. The young ladies, for their part, must be gracious and let the young men act in this chivalrous way. I sort of played "traffic cop" to institute this practice; I may need help of other adults when I can't be present to direct this.

Time Frame of Fall Festival I have mentioned to a few people individually that I would like the St. Mary's Fall Festival to move to a different time slot. Having it occur after the 8:30 a.m. Mass, as last year, made it virtually impossible for me to attend. In fact, after the 10:30 a.m. Mass in St. Joseph's that day, I had an emergency to take care of and I missed the entire Festival. Similar to the Knights of Columbus spaghetti feed, and a dinner we had sponsored by the Godteens, I would like the Fall Festival to run more as a late afternoon into early evening event,

such as 4:00 till 7:00 p.m. This is what I am going to ask the Altar Society and the parish to prayerfully consider.

Parish Office New Equipment Soon, this week in fact, more movement of the parishes' office to permanently be housed in the St. Mary's Hall will take place. I ordered some new computer equipment, as we were sorely in need of keeping up with the technology of our time. I also have a plan to create a position of secretary of all non-financial responsibilities so as to give Diane primary attention to our financial records. I will tell you more about this transition as it happens. Please pray for its success.

Introduction to Q & A Here are some questions and answers to the issues facing our diocesan priests and parishes.

Where can I find out what exactly is going on? Our Diocesan newspaper, the Southern Nebraska Register, has been publishing everything which Bishop Conley is doing to bring healing. The diocesan web site, www.lincolndiocese.org, also has the full extent of the details of specific priests and parishes involved.

How do I speak of this, especially to non-Catholic friends and family? Tell them that priests are people who sin, just like the rest of the human population. Tell them that those who have been abused or had boundary violations from priests are to be prayed for and fasted for to bring healing to them. Tell them that priests need our constant support. Tell them that even sinful priests still validly give us the sacraments, which are beautiful and life-sustaining to our souls.

What does it mean when a priest "resigns" his parish? This is a canonical (church law) term for a priest who is in need of help to leave the parish and allow for another priest to come in and replace him. Sometimes the priest-replacement may be an administrator, and not have the official title of "pastor". Resigning as a priest does NOT mean that he is no longer a priest. In fact, a priest's soul is forever changed by ordination such that he is a priest forever, even into heaven (pray God). Sometimes, the term "de-frocked" or "laicization" is used to describe a priest whom the Church and his bishop have removed from public priestly ministry such that he is not acting any longer as a priest. However, in cases of danger of death, even such a laicized priest could validly hear someone's confession or perform the anointing of the sick. No one of our current priests involved has been laicized, but a couple of them have resigned from their parishes.

What about the Pennsylvania grand jury report? It involves six dioceses in Pennsylvania, reporting on 70 years of history involving some 300 priests and at least 1,000 victims of terrible abuse. Go to trusted Catholic web sites, like nregister.com, to learn more about the healing which needs to happen in these dioceses.

What if I or someone I love was abused by a priest? Bishop Conley, the Diocese of Lincoln, and the Nebraska State Attorney General ask you to contact law enforcement. Please do this, I personally beg you.

What else can be done? Pray and fast, especially the Most Holy Rosary. When we recite the St. Michael Prayer at the end of Mass, especially ask for this evil upon young people by trusted priests to stop, **now**.

God Bless You!

Father Grell