

From the Pastor—October 20, 2019

Adoration Come and adore Our Lord, on Wednesday, October 23, at St. Mary's, from 8:00 - 9:00 PM!

Financials This bulletin contains our Fiscal Year 2018-2019 financial statements for St. Mary's and St. Joseph's. Pastors are required to provide this snapshot of a parish in its financial giftedness.

General While not intending to comment on our financials here in a comprehensive manner, I can easily say of both parishes that I admire and appreciate your generosity. You show by your giving to the collections that you understand the Gospel theme of being a cheerful giver and that all good gifts come from God above. Another biblical principle which is always at work in any parish is what St. Paul referred to in paraphrased words like this: your bounty now supplies for someone's lack, while someday your lack will be compensated by someone else's bounty. Wherever you are in your giving depends a great deal on the time of life that you are in. Are you young with children? Are you older and rely upon pension and savings from work-related 401K type of accounts? Are you married or single? Are you healthy or disabled? Were your parents able to bequeath you the fruits of their lives' works? Are you a veteran of military service such that your honorable time in serving our grateful nation impacted your ability to later be employed at what you might have otherwise desired to do prior to entering the service? No matter your situation, the Lord looks upon each one of us and asks us to be generous. Probably, frankly, each of us could do better. But I wish for you to know my appreciation and gratitude for what you do in terms of financial giving. It is a sign of your faith, and it is something that St. Mary's and St. Joseph's are known for throughout the Diocese of Lincoln.

Diocesan rebate Many of you are generous toward our Charity and Stewardship Appeal, traditionally held on the first two weekends of May. I don't have precise numbers to report, but I do want to inform you that both parishes reached the goal set for us by the Diocese. In fact, we went beyond our goal to the point that St. Mary's received a rebate back of \$23,000+ this week while St. Joseph's received \$1,000. These amounts are non-designated, unless I as pastor with the Finance Council have pre-determined to make them designated for any special projects. Needless to say, I welcomed these checks as I opened this week's mail.

Specific I really, really appreciate the residence at 1419 10th Street that you have provided for me as your pastor. Out of its many positive attributes, one that I notice is noticeable because of what I *don't* notice: it is a very quiet, soundproof house. I don't hear car doors slamming, I barely hear honking, I notice the train-whistle, but it is easily blocked out. This being said, the priest residence is approaching its 50th birthday of being built, and some updates are needed. Several have already been done since I arrived; I can share with you about those if you ask. It seems we are nearing the financial cash flow to soon take on at least two more upcoming projects. These projects are updating the master bathroom, which adjoins my quarters, and new guttering. The guttering has been observed as not handling some of the monster rains we have had, where several inches fall in a matter of minutes. We have a bid of around \$3,000 to install some new guttering. For the master bathroom, the shower is in the style popular of that construction era of being built within the bathtub. As I grow older, it is a concern of safety for me to step in and out of the tub. Also, the toilet would rightly be changed out to be handicapped accessible. The

vanity and sink need upgrading. We have a bid for this rectory upgrade of around \$15,000. *** These expenses, since they directly care for your parish priest, are shared by the parishes. The current rate of share for projects like this is that St. Mary's pays 85% while St. Joseph's pays the remaining 15%. *** While I believe we have cash flow enough from your regular giving, I would welcome for these two projects of nearly \$20,000 to have any special donations that you might wish to designate. I am thinking of people as they plan their end-of-year giving, and that these projects might be something that you could plan to sponsor toward your pastor's residence. We want this house to last well to its 100th birthday and beyond! And so upgrades are needed from time to time.

Should you Attend Confirmation? I have written about this topic in the past, and it deserves revisiting as we prepare for our Bishop to visit us to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation on Monday, October 28. "Old timers" have told me that when they were young, and the Bishop visited a parish for Mass, it was almost like a Holy Day of Obligation. But more than that, you as a parishioner *wanted* to be there. You wanted to see and hear this man who has been appointed by God to be the pastor of our souls. You wanted to see and hear the message of the Shepherd of the Diocese and conform yourself to the pathway that he marks out for us to attain heavenly rewards. So, this is one angle by which I want to invite all who read this to attend the Confirmation Mass. *** Another angle by which to welcome and invite you to attend Confirmation Mass is that it rekindles (or prepares) your desire of having received Confirmation. In this, it works the same as a married couple attending a wedding and rekindling their own ceremony of Matrimony. Or like a priest attending ordinations and rekindling memories from his own Ordination Mass. Especially for those with children in grades 2, 3, and 4 in our parishes of St. Mary's and St. Joseph's, your youth are "next up" to receive Confirmation in the 2022-2023 school year. You and they would greatly benefit to see what Confirmation looks like, sounds like, feels like. *** Some may shake their head at my words, and say to themselves or aloud, "Father, there is not enough room." I have evidence provided by our local funeral home that we can fit a whole lot of people, as in hundreds and hundreds of people, into our church and hall. I don't exaggerate to say that we in St. Mary's Church and Hall could fit every man, woman, and child in our two parishes for Holy Mass. What a welcome sight this would be for our Shepherd, Bishop James Conley! Aurora and Giltner, and our surrounding towns in the parish boundaries, would make an imprint upon His Excellency and warrant his attention to your robust faith and desire for the truth and beauty of God's Word and Sacraments. *** Please consider attending Confirmation Mass. My accounting here does not consider all of the family of the confirmands, but my intention is to cast as wide a net as possible, knowing that some simply cannot attend, and to let you know that I think our facilities can withstand a large congregation. *** I want to put out a request for parish leaders to be ready to help me the night of Confirmation. I am pretty sure that the hall space will need to be set up with chairs and that the image of the altar will be projected upon the wall. Also, parish leaders by their very presence will be helpful and charitable toward our guests. Only the Lord knows what harvest's status will be on October 28th. The weather is uncertain; with certainty, I can tell you the Lord *will* reward the slice of your time that day that you give Him to be at church for Confirmation.

Latin parts of Mass The Bishop has made it clear

that, if parishes are able, the parts of Mass when His Excellency comes to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation are to be sung in Greek (the Kyrie “Lord Have Mercy”) and in Latin (the Sanctus “Holy, Holy”, the Agnus Dei “Lamb of God”, and the Pater Noster “Our Father”). This list could include the Gloria, too. To help us prepare for this, I am going to have our Sunday Masses these next several weeks have these parts of Mass sung as indicated in these languages. *** By way of context, the first Mass, celebrated by Jesus, was probably in Our Lord’s everyday language, Aramaic. Over time, Greek would have become a dominant language that the Mass was celebrated in. Latin later came onto the scene as the language for Mass. At the Council of Trent (1545-1563), it was mandated for the universal Church that all Masses would be prayed in Latin, a mandate that was held until 1969 (or thereabouts). For most of this Christian era, Mass in English has been the exception, not the norm. It’s an interesting perspective, I hope you agree.

“Slow down, slow down, slow down” I remember a TV ad from the late ‘70’s, early ‘80’s with the tag line of “Read my lips—slow down, slow down, slow down.” The spokesman who said these words was a grim-looking man. *** The frenetic pace of harvest season is here. We are Nebraskans, and the harvest affects us all, whether directly employed in the noble profession of farming and crop production or not. Please know of my prayers for all of you who are actively working out in the fields. I give a blessing from the road as I drive past those in the field. I pray my blessing that your safety is paramount, that your machinery works well (or is quickly repaired), and that the weather cooperates. For all of us who share the roadways with harvest traffic, remember this: slow down, slow down, slow down. It is better to leave for your destination a few minutes early so that you can travel more slowly, planning to share the highways and gravel roads with heavy implements. To me, too, I consider that we are Christians even (or especially) when we are behind the steering wheel. You give extra witness to the peace of Christ when you are extra cautious as you drive. *** I don’t know if my comments here are right or wrong; I am just suggesting what I consider a prudent way to approach the reality of harvest time in Nebraska. If you lived in LA, New York, D.C., Miami, or other metro areas, you may be tempted to unleash very choice words if you saw a combine or tractor on your multi-laned expressways during your morning or evening commute. It seems that we as Nebraskans, who love our fellow Nebraskans who bring in the harvest, can excel more than drivers from the coasts or metropolitan cities and SLOW DOWN.

CCD We had a wonderful CCD Mass this past week, with student leadership from the Confirmation class. I offered these students the Body and Blood of the Lord by intinction (dipping) the Sacred Host into the Precious Blood. We practiced singing in Latin for the parts of Mass.

Seven Sisters Please find more information at: <https://sevensistersapostolate.org/home>.

Updated Census at Mass Our first of two census weekends was October 5-6. The numbers came in at: 5:00 (SM)—59; 8:15 (SM)—109; 10:45 (SJ)—92. For October 12-13, the numbers were: 5:00 (SM)—103; 8:15 (SM)—107; 10:45 (SJ)—42. I think the Diocese looks more at totals, and even more detailed at the average of the two weeks (I don’t know this for sure). Our averages would be: 5:00 (SM)—81; 8:15 (SM)—108; 10:45 (SJ)—67. The other number the Diocese looks at is the total population of our parishes, and this determines the average percentage of parishioners who

attend Mass, or at least the average who attended Mass on these two weekends. And this number is more statistically accurate when the Diocese compares it to the census numbers of these past 10 years. The Diocese can also look at things like if a neighboring parish to ours—take York or Doniphan, for example—had attendance of more or less people compared to more or less people at our parishes. This would seem to indicate a “migration” for that weekend, but even so, the averages over the years would still balance out. The factor that cannot be considered is what the census numbers are for neighboring parishes in other dioceses. If Central City or St. Leo’s - Grand Island had a bump of attendance up or down, we don’t know if they have taken a census the same weekend so as to compare. Does that make sense?

World Mission Sunday For World Mission Sunday...Be Baptized and Sent—on Mission in the World! Today, World Mission Sunday, in this Extraordinary Missionary Month, we are called to personal encounter with Jesus Christ alive in the Church, and to offer, through this Eucharistic celebration, our prayers and our generous financial support, through the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, to continue the mission of Jesus. Today we are “sent” out to witness to Mission in the world through our prayers and personal sacrifices for our brothers and sisters around the world. As little as \$25 helps support a catechist for a month in remote Latin America; \$75 provides for the work of religious Sisters caring for orphaned children in Africa; \$100 assists poor children in boarding schools in Asia. As always, your prayers are your most treasured gift to the Missions. Your prayers and financial help, offered today, WORLD MISSION SUNDAY, support mission priests, religious Sisters and Brothers, and lay catechists who are Christ’s witnesses to a world so in need of His healing, love, and peace.

God Bless You!

Father Grell