

From the Pastor—December 15, 2019

Adoration Schedule

Adoration this week in St. Mary's will include Confessions, if I can have a for-sure adorer to be present with our Eucharistic Lord Jesus in the monstrance—please let me know; Adoration this week will be in St. Mary's on Wednesday, December 18, 8:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Adoration this week in St. Joseph's will include Confessions, if I can have a for-sure adorer to be present with our Eucharistic Lord Jesus in the monstrance—please let me know; Adoration will be in St. Joseph's on Thursday, December 19, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Christmas Program I want everyone to know that they are invited to our CCD Christmas program on Sunday, December 15, at 1:30 p.m. Please note the difference in time from years in the past. The program will be held in the church, in front of the altar of Eucharistic sacrifice. To make room for the students of grades K-6 to fit in the space in front of the altar, we have temporarily moved the front pew rack. During the Christmas program, I will remove the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle. This will help us to remain in profound respect for Jesus' true presence under the appearance of bread. Still, I would ask that a prayerful demeanor be kept while you are watching the program. Come, and see our students show us the beautiful Christmas story!

Microphones and Audio One of the “punch list” items from our church renovation at St. Mary's from 2014, which I consider a duty to bring to completion, is the audio and microphone system which was upgraded at the time. I don't know if I am addressing the situation *exactly* as the parish desires, but I think I am on the right track. A tech representative from Diode Communications in Diller came a week ago and helped me figure out a receiver box and a wireless waist-attached mike to go with its frequency. He also showed me the floor mike which the parish has purchased and had for some time, but which has not been used. The other project which I think we need, and which I believe has been told to me as a need (or a want), is to obtain a cordless, hand-held mike. This would be very helpful on days like the Fall Festival when announcements need to be made and raffle ticket winners' names are drawn. It would also be helpful on days when we have special guest speakers, either in church or in the hall. Diode is going to quote me a proposal for what it would take to provide this addition of technology.

My Thanksgiving With the weather, I ended up staying here in Aurora over Thanksgiving. My original plan had been to go home to Gage County and see my parents. When it looked like the weather was going to turn for the worse, I thought I still might be able to join my brother and sister in Lincoln. But it seemed like even that venture might be iffy with the weather. So, while I had invitations to Thanksgiving dinner from parishioners, I chose to have a quiet day to myself. I did have good food to eat! And I prayed quite a bit, which is one of my favorite things to do. *** Hopefully, the weather will cooperate at Christmas so that I can be with my family.

Knights of Columbus 4th Degree Our local assembly of the Fourth Degree of the Knights of Columbus had its annual Christmas gathering on December 8th in McCool Junction. The event was at Kerry's in McCool; I

had eaten their food via catering, but never had I been inside their dining area. It was a very good turnout of Knights and their wives, and the food and fellowship made for a festive evening. *** I always like to put in a good word for men in our Third Degree Council 8010 to consider upping their membership to the Fourth Degree. The pillar of the Fourth Degree is patriotism, and your taking of this degree would be a vital way that you could serve our beloved United States of America to keep us one nation, under God.

Guadalupe Mass Our parishes celebrated Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12th. I had been practicing on speaking Spanish for the Mass, and I received compliments on how I did with it. I know I stumbled over many a word and phrase, but I know that I spoke the most important words of Consecration correctly. We had a good attendance; we are thankful for everyone who helped to make this Mass a reality. If you know of Spanish-speaking people who want to grow in faith, please have them contact Lorena Rodriguez of our parish; her contact information is within the main title and subject lines of our bulletin. St. Mary's and St. Joseph's would welcome Spanish speaking families into our congregations.

My Advent Meditation I have been coming back many times this Advent to the humility of Jesus. He came as a tiny baby into this world. He placed himself totally within the care of his mother, Mary, for the nine months of her pregnancy with him. Think of that: God was within a human person! But it is this same humility which we can receive and grow in through receiving the sacraments. It is only through the Church, which is a sacrament unto herself, that we can receive Jesus within us. People who see the blotches and wounds and catastrophic misdeeds and scandals of the Church are right to point them out, to be upset, to demand better operational standards. But we can never walk away from the Church. We must stay within it, as sinful as some of her members are, as much in denial as some of the highest-ranking clergy may seem to be. The Church at its roots begins in your home, dear reader. And even more intimately, the Church begins in *your heart*. What are you doing to make the Church come alive in your heart? How can you spread the joy of Christmas by preparing your heart to receive the Savior? Yes, it requires a great deal of humility to receive Jesus and to say, with Mary, “let it be done to me according to your word.” The Church may be “slapped around” and given many a black eye in the wider context of any parish, of any diocese, in any nation on earth. While this ineffectiveness of the Church is on display for all to see, the point that most will overlook is that in individual hearts, the Church is strong, and loving, and kind, and good, and joyful. My people, this is how I would have you live these last Advent days and to prepare your heart to receive Jesus at Christmas Mass.

God Bless You!

Father Grell