

From the Pastor—March 10, 2019

Mass Times Change March 10th Our parishes will have a new schedule beginning this weekend, March 10th. This Sunday, today, and going forward, the St. Mary's Mass will be at 8:15 a.m., followed by the St. Joseph's Mass at 10:45 a.m. I am praying for us all to adjust well to this change. The Saturday evening Mass will remain at 5:00 p.m. at St. Mary's.

It's a great day to be a priest! Ash Wednesday was truly a great day to be a priest. In fact, it took a while to fall asleep that night, not for reasons of distress, but because of the many wonderful people and situations that I had encountered throughout the day. I hope that those of you who attended the morning service in St. Mary's and the evening service in St. Joseph's realize that I wasn't trying to "short" you by not offering the "full Mass". Rather, it helped me tremendously by relieving the pressure of three offerings of the Holy Sacrifice. Each Mass is, in like manner but infinitely better than our Jewish ancestors, a true sacrifice. The Jewish priests in the Temple would slit the throat of the sacrificial lamb. Carrying the sheep, holding down the sheep, and tending to the sheep as it gave its life—the Jewish priest was surely tired after a day of offering sacrifice. The New Covenant priesthood which I am in a sublime way allowed to offer has its own physical and mental strain attached to it. *** I estimate that the morning service in Aurora had about 40 congregants; the evening St. Joseph's service had about 60. The evening Mass at St. Mary's had every pew at capacity! A parishioner made an announcement for people to scoot inward in their pews, such that we did not have to provide seating in the hall. It was good to have everyone in the main body (the nave) of the church. I imagine we had about 250 congregants at the Mass. Our youth in 7th grade led the music and readings, and they brought forward the gifts. *** I am a priest now, by God's grace, almost 23 years. Therefore, this was my 23rd time to distribute ashes. It moves me greatly to place those ashes on the foreheads of people, while saying, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return (the Church removed the word 'man' a few years ago, as well as 'shalt' and 'thou')." As I placed the ashes, I thought of your life, your beautiful life, that God has bestowed upon you. And then, in a non-gruesome way, I considered the reality that your earthly life (and mine) will end. The ashes show that we believe by faith in a place beyond the grave, where we will be eternally happy. I pray that these ashes placed on your heads will help you to turn from sin and to strive to choose the narrow way that leads to Heaven. While our mortal remains will disintegrate (speakers on Catholic radio say that atheists consider [sadly☹] that our bodies are nothing more than worm food), we as Christians believe in the resurrection of the dead when our souls will be joined back to our bodies. Always, though, remember that the damned in Hell will also have their bodies in eternal life. Never make a final choice against God. Never allow yourself to despair that following Christ is too hard, that you just aren't good enough. Let Ash Wednesday be a sign of hope! *** It was also a great day to be a priest on Ash Wednesday because it was the first time in a long time that I didn't need to white-knuckle-drive to Giltner—the roads had no ice or snow on them!

Scheduling Notes Our parishes will have Stations of the Cross offered weekly during Lent, every Tuesday, alternating between St. Mary's and St. Joseph's, and every Wednesday at St. Mary's (except April 3rd, the night when Father Kilcawley will be here to speak to parents). Most of the Stations' nights will have Confessions offered. I have

scheduled on Sundays, March 24 and 31, evening sessions called "Faith of our Father". I am looking forward to these, sharing elements of faith and offering time for Q & A. I am also hoping during Lent to meet with many of our families whose children are preparing for First Holy Communion and Confirmation. *** An interesting addition to our March calendar is sponsoring a breakfast for the Grand Island Diocese participants and families of the "Going Bananas" event for middle school and high school youth. (Our youth can also participate; talk to Alison Morrow for more details.) "Going Bananas", as I understand it, happens mainly on the campus of Central Catholic, including a couple of inspirational speakers who were both at the SEEK conference I attended. The Leadership Center here in Aurora is used to house students from further away than Grand Island. *** St. Mary's will host the Lincoln Diocesan Council of Catholic Women for their spring meeting. This will be held April 12-13. The Bishop will be here for Holy Mass on the 13th. I hope many St. Mary's and St. Joseph's women can be here for the meeting and Mass.

The Shroud of Turin Jim Bertrand will speak about the Holy Shroud of Turin at St. Mary's after the 8:15 Mass at Coffee and Rolls on March 10th. He will speak at St. Joseph's after Stations of the Cross on March 19th.

April 19th Silence Plan now to live Good Friday, April 19, as silently as possible. Be prayerful at home and at church. Strongly resist the urge to disperse your family every which way, through things like sleep-overs or extra-curricular activities. Celebrate at church the celebration of the Lord's Passion. Forsake that day your iTunes, iHeart, Spotify, Pandora, and radio. No Netflix; instead watch TV station EWTN to see Pope Francis celebrating Good Friday. Plan now to be very quiet and prayerful...all for Jesus.

Father Kilcawley A brother priest of mine, Father Sean Kilcawley, is an excellent speaker on the dangers of exposing our children to harmful places on-line. All our children really need is a flip-phone for keeping contact with parents and coaches. With smartphones, he or she can access the most terrible images imaginable. Smartphones provide a gazillion portals of evil. Teens (and younger) have them in their cars, their rooms, their lockers, their gym bags, and their back packs. Come and hear Father Kilcawley on Wednesday, April 3rd, at 6:30 p.m. All parents, grandparents, and those who love the children in their lives, are welcome. I must ask that every parent, mom **and** dad, who has children in the First Holy Communion and Confirmation classes, to be present for this talk. Your child's brain may literally, physically, be malfunctioning because of images they've seen. Father Kilcawley will encourage you and give you great hope.

What should we do for Lent? For some, attending daily Mass strengthens their 40 days of Lent. Those who work in nearby towns, please look up their daily Mass schedules. When you come to daily Mass, your heart is purified; your venial sins are forgiven; your soul is stirred by the Word of God; your body ingests the Body of Christ in Holy Communion (if you are disposed properly). Please consider coming to daily Mass.

God Bless You!

Father Grell