

From the Pastor—May 12, 2019

Tree Felled After contacting a couple of parishioners, I decided to have the hackberry tree at the northeast corner of the rectory lot removed. Standing at my rectory front door, the tree was to your right, almost directly north. The tree was large, like the other trees that line our St. Mary's property along N Street. I had noticed how the interior of the tree trunk was hollowed out, which had happened slowly over time. The branches and foliage up above were hindered in growth because of the compromised trunk. My fear was that a wind storm could have taken the tree down; I wanted it to come down on our own terms. As if to confirm my decision, one of my neighbors (not a parish member) had at about the same time mentioned to me that the tree needed to go before it fell and hurt someone. Ben McEndarfer, a bonded and insured local arborist, was hired to take the tree down and did a professional job. He used a self-operated hydraulic boom truck, a chainsaw, and a bobcat with a claw attached on its front end.

May Crowning At the 8:15 AM Mass at St. Mary's last Sunday, we crowned Mother Mary. See the Bishop's article in the May 10th edition of the Southern Nebraska Register which explains a little more about May Crowning. I was happy to have our youth participate in this devotional event, to help them (and us) love Mary more.

Giltner Graduation I arrived a little late, but attended, the Commencement Exercises of the Class of 2019 from Giltner High School last Sunday. I was blessed to see some seating available beside a couple of parishioners and was able to enter the gymnasium without disrupting the ceremony. I could tell it was a day of great joy, but some sadness is always present when seeing a class of students move on to the next chapter of their lives.

Eucharistic Rosary Crusade After I arrived home to Aurora from Giltner's graduation, I was preparing to head into Lincoln's Haymarket Park for the concluding event of our Diocese's Eucharistic Family Rosary Crusade. But I kept a wary on the skies; even as I drove from Giltner to Aurora, I could see the dark blue storm bank of clouds moving ever closer in the northwestern sky. When I was about to leave for Lincoln, the rain changed to hail. It was one of these hails which was so prolonged that it formed the looks of small snow drifts. And then, the TV reported a possible tornado north of town. I felt at that point like the air pressure was weirdly changing (maybe my imagination?), and I took shelter in my rectory basement. By the time I went back upstairs, it was approaching 6:00 PM; the Rosary event was scheduled to start at 7:00. I knew that I ought to walk around the hall and church, to see if there was damage or leaking. At the same time, I still thought maybe I could bolt into Lincoln and not miss much of the Rosary. The weather radar, however, showed the storm hovering in the I-80 corridor and a strong cell approaching Lincoln. I checked social media to see if the Rosary was going to be cancelled. After not seeing any information in this regard, I texted a couple of priest-friends. One of them said the Bishop had not yet arrived at Haymarket; the other one was with a bus-full of people who had made it to the park. The Bishop eventually made it there. The Rosary happened, but in a much-moderated format from the original plan. And I stayed home, because I was somewhat exhausted from the mental strain of trying to process the whole thing. *** Bishop Conley wrote the following in his Register column about the Rosary: *"I am deeply grateful to Father James Kelleher, SOLT, his executive committee, the Knights of the Holy Eucharist and*

the army of volunteers who carried out our 18-month Eucharistic Rosary Family Crusade. While the sudden storms last Sunday severely hampered the turnout for our culminating stadium event at Haymarket Park, we were still able to gather with a faithful remnant and pray the rosary and consecrate our diocese to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. I learned that many faithful pilgrims from all over the diocese were already on the road when the storms hit. Many had to eventually turn back, while some made it in time to join us in prayer. No prayer or effort will go unanswered, and although the event was not what we hoped it would be, I am confident that our Lord and our Lady were pleased with our willing hearts and our humble efforts. The weather symbolized for me the effort of the evil one to thwart our prayer and devotion. But in the end, the rosary was prayed and he was not able to stop our prayer in honor of Jesus our King and Mary our Queen."

"Ridin' the storm out" My entry above brings to mind the old pop hit song from REO Speedwagon, called "Ridin' the Storm Out." Remember that one?

Within our Priestly Extended Family All priests are brothers. We form a fraternity, and our family of birth becomes a part of each priest's family. To that end, please pray for three recent deaths within our priest-family: Showraiah Marneni (the dad of Father Marneni); Marie Rooney (mother of Father John Rooney from St. Gregory the Great Seminary and of Father Donald Rooney of the Diocese of Arlington); and Brent Sasse (the younger brother of Deacon-to-be Alec Sasse. Alec will be ordained by Bishop Conley on May 24th; the joy of that day for Alec, his parents, and his one surviving brother will now be hovered over with this raw loss of Brent at age 24.)

Lent is Over...Now What? During one of my Easter Day Mass homilies, I mentioned my brother-in-law, Bob, and how his death meant that he has crossed over into eternal life. And, that with his proper disposition of receiving the sacraments, his eternal life—we know by faith—is promised to be spent with Jesus in heaven. My spontaneous comment after I said this was, "I am a little jealous of him!" As you celebrate these 50 days of Easter, think of the new life that Jesus risen from the tomb showed to his disciples. Place deceased loved ones within that love and new life of Jesus. It can be a very consoling exercise.

Wednesday Holy Hour(s) Come pray a Holy Hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance this week on Wednesday at St. Mary's. Please stop by between 6:30 and 8:00 PM this Wednesday.

Cast Your Net Last weekend, we began our 2019 Charity and Stewardship Appeal in St. Mary's and St. Joseph's. "Text-to-Give" is a quick and easy way to pay your pledge by credit/debit card, or as a direct payment from your bank account, right from your smartphone. Text "Give \$____" (fill in the amount) to 531-233-1022. Then, follow the link in the reply text message. Message and data rates may apply. You can also make an on-line gift at this web address: <https://lincolndiocese.aware3.net/give/>.

God Bless You!

Father Grell