

## **From the Pastor—June 30, 2019**

**Volunteering** [re-printed from June 23<sup>rd</sup>] It cannot come down to, “Father will get somebody to do it.” It cannot be this way. And here’s why. Several times, more than I would like to admit, I have been very coarse if not downright rude and vicious (in thought and/or deed) to parishioners over my 23 years of priesthood. What do I mean by this rather startling statement? I mean to say that I have misjudged someone who I thought would be a perfect fit to give more of their time, to give more of their talents. And, yes, even to give more of their treasure and material wealth which they have received from God. I have been called out, and rightly so, when I have asked for too much of parishioners. Let’s say I have asked them to do tasks X, Y, and Z. They have responded back, “Father, I can do X, but I cannot do Y and Z because of \_\_\_\_\_.” Whatever their reason has been, I am not in a position to say whether that reason adds up to me. In fact, how dare I think that I can judge whether their reason is sufficient for them to decline on doing tasks Y and Z! That is arrogant of me, and I have fallen into such arrogance, even with some of you, dear souls of St. Mary’s and St. Joseph’s. And I ask your forgiveness. \*\*\* Let me speak of volunteering from a slightly different angle. In our parish families, it is not us and them. It is not “we do this, they do that.” Rather, it is all us, together. It is we who approach things, and not a divided sense of each group accomplishing its own things. We must be we; we must be us to each other, for we are us. We are NOT us and them. \*\*\* Now, or in the past, or in the future, when you see or hear that volunteers are needed for something, let’s pray and approach it as us, all together, finding solutions. It may be that a solution is to be a “co-volunteer”, meaning that you and someone combine to do the task at hand. It may be that we meet and determine a differing style of fulfilling tasks X, Y, and Z. Lots of you have lots of experience with finding lots of solutions, and lots of ideas coming together can solve most anything a parish has to approach to solve together. Please prayerfully consider what I say here, and let’s be “us”, together, building the Kingdom of God here in St. Mary’s and St. Joseph’s.

**Corpus Christi on June 22-23** On short notice, I asked the musicians for our Corpus Christi Masses to sing the Sequence. This is the ancient hymn which is sung between the Second Reading and the Alleluia. I was so happy to have it sung so well at all three Masses in St. Mary’s and St. Joseph’s! The Adoration after Holy Mass was beautiful. Many people were immersed in prayer before Our Lord. Much reverence was shown when Mass ended as some stayed and some departed. I was remiss in not notifying the parishes earlier by way of bulletin note that the Masses for this great Solemnity would include Adoration. As you may have seen, the Grand Island newspaper featured the grand Eucharistic Procession which originated from St. Mary’s Cathedral. We, too, could have a procession outdoors of this magnitude...as the Lord so moves us, we will aim toward this public display of walking with Jesus through the streets of Aurora and Giltner. \*\*\* I was able to pray deeply in my heart for many intentions. I noticed one youth being brought to the altar for a closer look at Jesus truly present. When I brought the monstrance to the altar (the monstrance “de-mon-

strates” the Big Host for Adoration), I was touched by how beautiful our St. Mary’s and St. Joseph’s monstrances are. I believe that the time of Adoration at St. Joseph’s was the first time I have exposed the Blessed Sacrament there. The monstrance is unique to me among the many monstrances I have seen at my many priestly assignments across the Diocese. I love the statuettes of Saints Peter and Paul on this monstrance, along with Our Lord carrying the lost sheep as our Good Shepherd. The St. Joseph’s monstrance has a “see-through” effect, with the Big Host being so placed that one can see around its sides to experience Adoration better in three-dimensional effect. Thank you, one and all, for your wonderful love for Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. And be sure to ask Him for more faith if you find this teaching difficult to believe. He is truly present; be assured of that. I have given my life over to this belief.

**Royals in Omaha!** So, I attended the first-EVER Major League Baseball game held within the State of Nebraska! It was (and will remain) a pretty big deal to me. Did any of you reading this attend? Do you know of someone who did? Here is a recap of how my day on June 13<sup>th</sup> went, as I headed to Omaha for the big game (and thank you to the parishioner who donated toward my game ticket—I appreciate it!). \*\*\* I went to visit my former parish of Plattsmouth prior to the evening game at TD Ameritrade Park. It was my first visit back to the parish since I walked out of my four-year home there on June 19, 2017. After a one-hour plus visit with my successor, Father Michael Houlihan, and the office manager and bookkeeper who remain in the positions they served with me, I traveled up Highway 75 from and through Cass and Sarpy Counties into Douglas County. An overhead electronic sign motioned the way for “Major League Baseball” traffic to head. That sort of signage, and the cars and pedestrians I saw on my drive, only stirred my excitement more for the BIG GAME. \*\*\* I prefer usually to park and walk when I attend events such as the State Fair or other large gatherings...it is my *modus operandi*. I prefer this to circling an almost full parking lot or waiting in a line of cars to enter such a lot. I ended up parking more blocks away than I would have had to, but the weather was beautiful and the walk did me well. \*\*\* As I approached the stadium it was about right-on 7:00 PM, with the first pitch scheduled for 7:08. But there was a huge logjam at the gate. Someone who seemed like he knew what he was doing, wearing a vest and a lanyard, was barking out to us “the line is quicker at Gate 1!” So, I took the bait and hustled over to Gate 1...only to find another logjam. A similar vested and lanyard-ed official at Gate 1 said, “Less waiting at Gate 2!” I took the bait again, and this time was more successful. \*\*\* While walking from Gate 1 to Gate 2, the National Anthem and first pitch probably happened. As I was walking, I heard a voice: “Father Grell!” I had on my custom-made Royals jersey which has my name on the back, so it could have been almost anyone who said this to me! Turns out it was my third cousin from Beatrice; our Grandpas Grell (Frank for me, August for her) were first cousins. She lives in Seward with her husband and two boys. I hadn’t seen them for a while. We chatted and covered the basics about the status of our respective branches of Grell. But I

could see that if I stayed talking to them, it would delay further my finding of my seat. And Sara and her family's seats were far away from mine. So I separated from them with a wave and a goodbye and went through the ticket line with great anticipation. \*\*\* I barged and beelined my way through the concourse. I probably was not very priestlike (my black clothing and collar were under my Royals jersey). I hope that not many people noticed or even cared. I finally arrived at my section. But then—and I have never experienced this in attending a number of baseball games over the years—the attendant at the top of the section would not allow anyone past her while live play was happening on the field. This makes sense, I guess, as someone not aware of things could easily get bonked badly by a foul ball. \*\*\* I finally arrived at my seat; the game was either at the bottom of the first inning or top of the second. I hadn't missed any scoring. I was so happy! The location of my seat was like this: if you could draw a straight line at a right angle from home base, that's where I was on the first base side. I was about 24 rows up, behind the dugout. \*\*\* The game progressed with a home run from former Creighton standout Nicky Lopez into the short right field stands. I took in the game with such a feeling of "I can't believe Major League Baseball is happening in Omaha!" I was sitting nearby some Detroit Tiger fans, who were the Royals' opponent. They were in town for the College World Series, apparently, to see the University of Michigan play. \*\*\* A disappointment was that Nebraska native and former Husker Alex Gordon did not play. He had been hit by a pitch in the game the day before, and so he was resting some tightness or other such effect of that previous game. Neither did my fellow Southern High School graduate, Jake Diekman, pitch in the game. \*\*\* All ended well as the Royals won, 7-3. As people filed out of the stadium—it was a crowd of 25,540 in a stadium advertised as seating of 24,500—I stuck around and then walked down to the dugout area. I was able to take some selfie pictures of me with the field in the background. I was hoping that maybe by chance, a stray Royal player or coach would meander back to the field from the clubhouse and that I could say "howdy" to them, but no such luck. \*\*\* I walked through downtown Omaha back to my car. Outdoor music was playing and people were milling about. It was just so peaceful and so beautiful. As I drove down I-80 heading west, I listened to Spirit Catholic Radio and had a great drive. It was well after midnight when I drove into my rectory garage. It was such a great experience!

**I-80 Collar Series** The I-80 Collar Series is a game of softball which began in 2015. It matches the Lincoln Diocesan priests versus the priests of the Archdiocese of Omaha. I played for the first couple of years, and really enjoyed it. One of my predecessors here, Father Craig Doty, has played each year—he is a good athlete, as you may recall. Bishop Conley played, as pitcher and as a hitter. He mentioned the ballgame in his Register column this week, and many pictures of the game are at the link at the end of this note. Lieutenant Governor Mike Foley, whose brothers-in-law are the Reverends Mark, Dan, and Leo Seiker, presented the trophy to our diocese after we won, 27-11. The Omaha paper even included in their sports section a short write-up of the game! They reported an estimated 3,000 fans attending at

Werner Park for the game; not a bad showing for a bunch of amateur-playing priests. Thank you to the Nebraska State Knights of Columbus for sponsoring this great event. See pictures of the game at this link: <https://www.lincolndiocese.org/photo-video/picture-gallery/12332-i-80-collar-series-2019>

**Independence Day Mass** For many, the Fourth of July is a day off from regular duties and responsibilities. I have scheduled Holy Mass on July 4 for 9:00 AM for people of St. Mary's and St. Joseph's. Do know you are welcome to attend! It is a tribute to so many who have gone before us, and to our current military members, that we have religious freedom to be able to attend Holy Mass without fear of reprisal or attack. Many places in the world do not enjoy such freedom. Come and pray in thanksgiving for our great nation on this day. Happy Birthday, USA!!!

**Peter's Pence** Today is the Peter's Pence Collection, a worldwide collection that supports the charitable works of Pope Francis. Funds from this collection help victims of war, oppression, and natural disasters. Take this opportunity to join with Pope Francis and be a witness of charity to our suffering brothers and sisters. Please be generous today. For more information, visit [www.usccb.org/peters-pence](http://www.usccb.org/peters-pence). {In Spanish}: Hoy es la Colecta Peter's Pence, una colecta a nivel mundial que financia las obras de caridad del papa Francisco. Los fondos recaudados en esta colecta ayudan a las víctimas de la guerra, la opresión y los desastres naturales. Tomen esta oportunidad para unirse al papa Francisco y sean testigos de la caridad para nuestros hermanos y hermanas. Por favor, sean generosos hoy. Para más información, visiten [www.usccb.org/peters-pence](http://www.usccb.org/peters-pence).

**Spirit Mornings** I will be on Spirit Mornings with my radio meditations this week. The general schedule is that my pre-recorded voiced words will air at 7:10, 8:10, and 10:15 AM. Also, the recordings are saved to the Spirit Radio's web site and Sound Cloud accounts. Please listen to the words I say, and/or pray that they are helpful to people as we all strive to encounter Jesus. Tune in at 102.7 FM, 91.5 FM, or on-line at [spiritcatholicradio.com](http://spiritcatholicradio.com).

**Youth Unite!** For our youth aged 14-22, these Wednesday evenings are serving our wonderful young people. The evenings are 8:00-10:00 PM, with this week's gathering occurring on July 2, Tuesday, so as to allow family time for people with Independence Day gatherings. Please sign up, parents or non-parents of current youth, to be present in church at prayer before the Blessed Sacrament the entirety of the two hours, in one-hour shifts. Confessions are offered during the holy hour, after the catechesis and Q&A, and Bobby and Alyssa Jacobs have provided praise and worship music these past three weeks. See you at Youth Unite! on July 2!

**God Bless You!**

**Father Grell**