

## From the Pastor—July 21, 2019

### Did You Ever Notice?

St. Mary's I enjoy bowing my head to Jesus in the tabernacle, through the glass doors, as I walk through the St. Mary's Hall. I encourage you to look in to Jesus in the tabernacle as you are in the Hall before and after Mass, or if you stop by the church on business during the week...and certainly, to visit Him a lot in church as you are able. I noticed something recently that I had not yet noticed in my 2+ years here. When you walk in the exterior doors of St. Mary's new entryways, re-constructed in 2014, you can see through the glass side doors all the way to the tabernacle! It was a "eureka" moment to me, because it means that every time you enter and you leave, you can quick-glance and see the tabernacle and say "hello" and "goodbye" to Jesus! Check it out and see if you see what I mean. This simple gesture is a great opportunity to build our Eucharistic love for Our Lord, truly present in all the tabernacles of the world.

St. Joseph's I have had to shield my eyes a few times when I preach at the ambo (pulpit) at St. Joseph's. It is mostly during the Wednesday daily Mass. What is the cause of this? The sun glaring off my car's windshield, directly into the sanctuary of church! I have only myself to blame, for I would not have to park where I usually park. Also, the stained glass along our walls of St. Joseph's do lots of cool things with the sunlight; have you noticed this?

May I Muse? Much the same as a priest being assigned to a parish, through the Holy Spirit inspiring his Bishop, all Christians have unexpected life changes to which God calls them. It might be a wonderful promotion at work...or enduring the cross of your position being downsized and needing to find new employment. It could be unexpected attention to something posted on social media, what people refer to as "going viral". Dear Christian reader of my words, I wish to muse alongside of you about some members of our St. Mary's and St. Joseph's families being directed by Our Lord toward something they may not expect. I speak of our parishes' longstanding devotion to our precious youth being formed in our beautiful Catholic faith. You might not expect ever helping our youth and families, or you might say, "not now" or "not yet" or "already did that". But read on, if you will, and see how the Holy Spirit moves you. Muse with me.

CCD Coordinator Our CCD coordinator for St. Mary's and St. Joseph's has multi-faceted tasks throughout the school year.

>>>Communicator. The coordinator has been very good with communicating with teachers and families, especially via the Remind app on smart phones. Also, sending out e-mails are important for detailing more lengthy information than the app's messages allow for.

>>> Materials Administrating. An important task of the coordinator is placing the order for new books which are needed each school year. The classroom teachers have at times relied upon the coordinator to make photocopies on the parish copier of resources which are needed for class.

>>>Promoter of teachers and pastor I see the coordinator, too, as being the primary liaison between the teachers and me. In this role, what is needed is a good communicator, cheerful and prompt (and patient with me when I am not as cheerful and prompt as I ought to be). In this role, too, the coordinator gets messages to the teachers that I may not be able to relay in person. The coordinator could approach fellow parishioners who might need encouragement to serve as teachers or classroom helpers.

>>>Ministry of Presence. It is obvious to me that we

have someone present at all CCD sessions on Wednesday evenings who is "on call", helping younger students navigate drinking fountains and bathroom breaks, or assisting with the occasional band-aid which is needed to be given to a student. This part of the coordinator is for a people-person, and it is evangelical, as you serve as a welcome face (the face of Christ) to students and to families.

>>>Record Keeping. This facet of the coordinator involves two spheres. One is to be accurate in submitting what the Diocese needs reported to the Office of Religious Education. The other sphere is assisting our parishes to be accurate in assisting the students who are approaching the Sacraments. This means verifying the baptismal record of each student as they prepare to receive First Penance, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation.

>>>A Paid Position. As I am only musing, have our parishes ever considered making the CCD Coordinator be a paid position? This would require careful discernment with the Parish and Finance Councils of St. Mary's and St. Joseph's, and the Parish Trustees. Many parishes larger than ours have what is usually referred to as a DRE, i.e. Director of Religious Education. If we were to go to a paid position, it would be a great way to show our love of our youth by ensuring that CCD went smoothly over the course of the school year. My guess is, that at about 100 students (around 93 from St. Mary's and 7 from St. Joseph's), we have one of the larger CCD enrollments in the entire Diocese of Lincoln. This is a great "problem" to have! Both of our parishes, combined, are probably in the lower half of our diocese in terms of the census of overall members. But many larger parishes than ours (think of York, Seward, McCook, Hastings, Nebraska City, Plattsmouth, Wahoo, David City) have Catholic schools which make their CCD programs smaller than ours. I can speak firsthand of Plattsmouth, having just come from there in 2017. In my final year serving Plattsmouth, our K-8 enrollment was around 150, while our CCD enrollment for K-8 was around 30. You can see the disparity, and I believe the other towns listed above would show similar proportions between enrollment of Catholic school versus enrollment of CCD.

Godteens godparents My musing on the godparents needed to sponsor our freshman class are a little more refined, as this time commitment involves the added hope and expectation that the godparents open up their home to this class of students from now until they graduate from high school in 2023. I can see the following questions coming up, along with my mused answers:

>>>Does our home have to be immaculately clean and well-furnished with home movie theaters and expansive couches and ginormous dining room tables? No.

>>>Do our children have to be sent to a sitter for the evenings when we host Godteens? No...it is great for the high schoolers to interact with your young children and observe you parenting them.

>>>Yikes!...do we have to perfectly parent our young children? No, no, no...the high schoolers will learn, too, that perfect parents don't exist, and it just might make them feel greater gratitude for their own parents' parenting of them.

>>>Do we have to enjoy being around high schoolers? Yes, that would be quite helpful☺.

>>>What if the Godteens ask us questions that we don't know how to answer? It is important to be vulnerable, such that the high schoolers could learn even from your uncertainty. You can always promise them an answer at the next meeting, and then talk to me or research the topic on the

internet or in your Catechism and Bible.

>>>So, do the parishes of St. Mary's and St. Joseph's expect godparents of Godteens to have young children under their roof? No; it would be cool, I think, for a family whose children are grown and on their own to host the high schoolers of Godteens.

>>>What in the world do I teach as curriculum...we barely have time to manage our own family affairs much less be expected to prepare elaborate lessons each week? The Diocese in general has guidelines for curriculum each year of high school (see the diocesan web site). In general, 9<sup>th</sup> grade is dedicated to Scripture, 10<sup>th</sup> grade to Church History and the Sacraments, Junior year to Morality, and Senior year to vocation and social justice. In addition, our parishes of St. Mary's and St. Joseph's have been doing Godteens long enough that we have a curriculum that is discussed among the godparents and handed down from year to year.

>>>What if a particular week is insane for our family (funeral to attend, jury duty, the high point of planting or harvest seasons) and we can't meet on a particular Wednesday? This can be accommodated; it could be that I (Father Grell) could have the students join me in the hall for to ease that week of craziness in your world.

\*\*\* Thus ends my musings on the topics of CCD coordinator and Godteens godparents. You can add your own thoughts, and even speak to me about them if you wish. In sum, given what I have mused upon here, it seems to me that many in our parishes would be well qualified, and even superb, to serve as CCD coordinator and Godteens godparents.

**Knights of Columbus 4<sup>th</sup> Degree** Our Knights of Columbus based out of St. Mary's is what is called a "council" for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> degree members. When a Catholic man enters the 4<sup>th</sup> degree of the Knights, the group is referred to as an "assembly". He then has a sort of dual membership, to both his local council and his local assembly. Our Council 8010 members who enter the 4<sup>th</sup> degree come under the jurisdiction of the Msgr. Mandeville Assembly, which includes Seward and York (and other parishes). The next meeting of the Assembly has social time included, for wives to attend with the members. It will be Sunday, July 28, at the Hughes Brothers Cabin, 3148 Bluff Road, Seward, NE. This is roughly 2.5 miles west of Highway 15 and Hillcrest/Bluff Roads. Social time begins at 4:30 PM, followed by the meeting at 5:00, and then the dinner of grilled steaks at 5:30. Contact Ken Meyer for more information at 402-641-6715.

**Detasseler Detected** This past week, I was at the Post Office at about 4:00 PM. I saw a young man walking s-l-o-w-l-y down the sidewalk. He seemed dazed, dejected, or both. He carried a cooler in one hand and a water jug in the other. He had a sun-protecting hat as well as a scarf or handkerchief around his neck. I did not recognize the identity of the young man, but he showed the telltale signs of being a detasseler. Yes, it appears detasseling season is here! \*\*\* I detasseled for two summers; I totally get it, the concept, of why it's done. I am glad that young people like the one described do this job. Please know of my prayers for a successful season.

**#54** Kindly remember my parents in prayer this week, as they celebrate their 54<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on Wednesday, July 24. Thank you!

**It's a Great Day to be a Catholic!** Several Catholic news events from recent days warrant a shout-out. First, Bishop Fulton Sheen's cause to become "Blessed" in the Church was approved by Pope Francis. The miracle from

heaven worked by Bishop Sheen was a baby who was born without a pulse. Medical professionals could not revive him and had all but given up. Sixty-one minutes after birth, his heart started beating and he started breathing. He is a healthy 9-year old now in the Peoria, Illinois, area (Bishop Sheen's native Diocese is Peoria), and he shows no apparent deleterious effects of going so long without a heartbeat and breathing. \*\*\* Secondly, Blessed Cardinal John Henry Newman was approved by Pope Francis to be canonized a Saint! This is great news, especially for Newman Centers in our State which are named after him, on the campuses of UN-L, UN-O, UN-K, Wayne, Doane, and others. \*\*\* Finally, the Lincoln Diocese's neighboring diocese to the east in Iowa received a new shepherd. Bishop-elect William Joensen will be ordained and consecrated the 10<sup>th</sup> bishop of the Des Moines Diocese on September 27<sup>th</sup>. Up till now, Father Joensen has served as a priest of the Archdiocese of Dubuque after being ordained in 1989. He has served since 2002 at Loras College in Dubuque, the college namesake for my name. \*\*\* Truly, it's a great day to be a Catholic!

**Spirit Catholic Radio** I am blessed to be giving the Morning Prayer meditations on Spirit Catholic Radio this week. Do try to listen! If you miss their original broadcast at 7:10, 8:10, and 10:15 AM, Monday through Friday, they are usually posted later in the day on Spirit's web site and SoundCloud channel. Go to [spiritcatholicradio.com](http://spiritcatholicradio.com).

**NFP Week** July 21-27 has been designated by our U.S. bishops as National Natural Family Planning Awareness Week. I am big believer in this beautiful way to grow married love and avoid the sin of selfishness in marriage. Our Diocese of Lincoln's "go-to" person for NFP is Jennifer Svagera, BS, FCP. She can be reached at 402-473-0630 or [jennifer-svagera@cdolinc.net](mailto:jennifer-svagera@cdolinc.net).

**Suscipe Prayer** I mentioned and sang a prayer in my homily recently called the Suscipe. This is a Latin word for "receive". The prayer is attributed to St. Ignatius of Loyola, who founded the Jesuits. Here it is: "*Take, O Lord, and receive my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding and my whole will. All that I am and all that I possess, Thou hast given me: I surrender it all to Thee to be disposed of according to Thy will. Give me only Thy love and Thy grace; with these I will be rich enough and will desire nothing more. Amen.*"

**Adoration** Come on July 24, at St. Mary's, from 7:00 - 8:00 PM!

**God Bless You!**

**Father Grell**