

From the Pastor—September 22, 2019

Adoration Come and adore Our Lord, on Friday, September 27, at St. Mary's, from 6:00 - 7:00 PM!

Welcome Annie! After prayer and consultation, I have hired Mrs. Annie De La Cruz as our new CCD coordinator. She and her husband, Ernesto, and their children live in Hampton and are members of St. Mary Parish. Welcome to the team, Annie!

St. Mary Parish Council Report Here are some highlights from the Parish Council meeting held September 12 at St. Mary's:

Gym and Swim I appreciated the discussion among our Parish Council members and Godteens coordinator, Tim and Molly Elge. Messiah Lutheran Church in Aurora invited our students to participate in a "Gym and Swim" fun event at the Leadership Center last week. Upon advisement, I was in favor of our high school youth, on a class-by-class decision, to attend the "Gym and Swim". We thank Messiah for bringing together our youth.

Financial report for 2018-2019 As per diocesan synodal legislation, "an annual report for each parish and mission shall be produced and distributed to the parishioners." I hope to soon have this available. I don't mind your encouragement to keep me accountable to produce this in a timely manner.

Gutters on rectory In Building and Grounds news, committee chairman, Greg Bonifas, gave his recommendation to accept a bid from ABC. This cost, since it is for the rectory of your priest, will be shared between St. Mary and St. Joseph Parishes. It affects guttering where the heavy and abundant rains have not kept up in the discharge of water run-off from the roof.

Dramatic up-tick in water usage We were recently made aware of a dramatic increase in water usage at the church/hall. An amount which is typically around 30,000 gallons had zoomed to 109,000 gallons in recent meter readings. We think we found the problem in a leaky toilet in the women's restroom. (To the parishioner who is employed in the city offices for noticing this increase and taking to heart this need of our parish operations, and to the parishioner who repaired the toilet—thank you!)

Thanks to KC matching fund While the final numbers will soon be shown to you, I think I can safely say that the Knights of Columbus are going to match the entirety of the \$10,000 that they pledged for all Debt Reduction donations made to St. Mary's prior to September 1. In fact, when we get the updated numbers on our debt for the 2014 addition and church renovation, I think everyone will be happily surprised at the dramatic strides you have worked hard at to achieve paying off our debt to the Diocese.

Census at Mass As the Diocese of Lincoln has done for a number of years (at least 10), the first two weekends of October will be designated for counting the number of people at weekend Masses. These numbers are important for the Bishop as His Excellency discerns the needs of each parish within the framework of the entire diocese. I hope to share what our percentage of Mass attendance is after the October census.

Study Day When the priests of the diocese gather with their bishop for educational topics, fellowship, and prayer, it is always a wonderful day. However, I find it also to be a fatiguing day with the amount of information given along with travel time and much sensory engagement (or maybe I am just getting older!). Here are some highlights from our Study Day held September 17th at St. Gregory the Great

Seminary:

Vicar of Administration The word "vicar" when used in Church language means "priest". Bishop Conley has created a new Vicar appointment in the Diocese called the "Vicar of Administration". Bishop compared it to someone who serves as a Chief Operating Officer (COO) of a corporation. The first Vicar who will serve our Bishop and Diocese in this way is Father Joseph Walsh. Many of you know him from his years as pastor of St. Cecilia in Hastings and from serving as executive director of Catholic Social Services. Father Walsh is currently the pastor of St. James in Cortland, which is located about 20 miles south of Lincoln. With this new appointment, in addition to pastoring St. James, Father Walsh will assist the Bishop in many ways. Please pray for him and the success of this vicar appointment.

Newman Institute Dr. John Freeh gave an update on this four-year old program where students at UN-L can take classes at the Newman Center and have them apply toward their degree programs in the various colleges on campus. One of the hopes of this Institute is to restore the ideal of education, so that misguided pedagogy methods of higher education may be replaced with classical ideas according to Catholic thought and scholarship.

Emmaus Institute Dr. Vern Steiner spoke to us priests about the upstart Institute whose name is based upon Luke chapter 24, where Our Lord encountered the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Dr. Steiner has a fascinating conversion story and was, in fact, recently featured on EWTN's The Journey Home. Those of you who enjoy conversion stories would do well to find this program at EWTN's web site. Dr. Steiner has some great course offerings to teach you, the people, more about the Bible; look up the Institute's web site at emmausinstitute.net.

Solutio This company supports (well) many web sites for Catholic institutions, including our diocesan web site. I may want to approach the parishes of St. Mary and St. Joseph to see if we would want to utilize their services. See solutiosoftware.com.

Our Diocesan Financial Health This fiscal year of 2019-2020 will see our diocesan assessments capped at 9.5% of parish taxable income. I am understating the situation in dramatic form, but suffice to say that a number of measures have been implemented since 2016 that places our Diocese on much better financial footing. We could not do what we do as the Church of Lincoln without all of you good people who sacrificially give your time and treasure for the love of Jesus.

Sports Fix I have had ample opportunities to feed my sports "fix" since last bulletin, including a Cross Country meet, a few innings of Softball, and tuning in on internet and regular TV to Husker Volleyball. It's been fun!

Loving Life Coalition The next meeting of the Loving Life Coalition (LLC) of Hamilton County will be held (and all who read this are welcome) on Monday, September 23, 6:30pm, at St. Mary's Hall. Like us on Facebook at "Loving Life Coalition Hamilton County, NE".

God Bless You!

Father Grell