

From the Pastor—September 8, 2019

Adoration Come and adore Our Lord, on Tuesday, September 10, at St. Mary's, from 8:00 - 9:00 PM!

NU-CU Volleyball I was pretty pumped to be able to attend the first Nebraska volleyball game of the season. The Huskers played Creighton at the Devaney Center in Lincoln. Big Red won, and I was happy for that. But one of Creighton's players is from my second parish assignment, and I have remained friends with her family. Her name is Jaela Zimmerman, #7, for the Blue Jays; she was not born yet when I was the assistant at North American Martyrs. But I knew her two older siblings well. Big sister Maddie was in 2nd grade during my time at Martyrs. I would visit the classrooms, and Madison prayed and prayed that her dad would become Catholic. Trey, her dad, had taken the RCIA (Catholic Instruction Class) but hadn't been ready to enter the Church at the time. Just before the Bishop appointed me as pastor of Dwight and Bee, Trey told me that he was ready to be a Catholic. So, we had a special Mass and I was privileged to give him the sacraments and bring him into full communion in the Church. After the volleyball game on August 30th, the Zimmerman family had a good conversation beside the Devaney court. They were disappointed that Creighton lost. I enjoyed seeing the match, and I enjoyed rekindling my friendship with the Zimmermans.

Giltner Playground Blessing Anyone who has driven past the Giltner Public School this summer has seen the work being put into the new playground. The rainfall in that part of Hamilton County has affected the progress of the playground construction, but it is mostly all installed. With permission of the school administration, for which I am grateful, I blessed the playground after the Mass at St. Joseph's on September 1. I invited anyone at Mass to come over to the school to be present for the blessing, and a good number were able to. The Church believes in blessing practically anything that is for the good of human flourishing. Playgrounds certainly qualify through encouraging fitness and cooperation among the young (and young-at-heart). After the blessing, some of our younger members played on the now-blessed equipment. And a couple of our young-at-hearts tried to squeeze their way into the spinnny-contraption and the see-saw! It was a fun way to end our Sunday of community and worship at St. Joseph's in Giltner.

My Homilies I strive as best I can to type up my homilies each week. It helps me to be more organized in what I preach, and the word count function is helpful so that I stay on track toward my intended take-home message. *** On our web site, I am hoping to build a solid selection of my homilies for you to be able to look at, if you wish. Another benefit that having my homilies typed is that for those who may have difficulty in hearing my words, the printed copy is helpful so that they can know and understand my message. For example, my mother would benefit from such a printed copy, because she has a slight hearing deficit and sometimes her priest's words are not as clear enough. One thing that I could do, if I am well prepared, is to offer copies of my homily to pick up before or after Mass. This would be helpful for those who need a little extra help in following along. I would want people who wish for this special copy to let me know so that if I were to make the homily available, I would not waste paper by producing too many copies.

Catholic Instruction Class I included in last week's bulletin a survey of sorts, to assess the interest in the RCIA (Catholic Instruction) classes. Please return these sheets, and please consider inviting someone to attend.

Father Flashbacks I was driving around this week, outside of Hamilton County, and I saw a field or two of alfalfa hay and some grain sorghum. These are familiar feed crops from my youth. We were dryland farmers, and so milo was drought resistant to be better yielding than corn. We had soybeans, too, and they usually did pretty well without irrigation. Over time, our acres of alfalfa shrank to where we don't have any today. I loved the smell of fresh-cut alfalfa. Without seeing too much alfalfa on any patches of land of our parishioners, I don't have the chance to ask if people are getting to a fourth cutting by now, or how the year has treated the alfalfa. It seems from my experience and from reading ag articles that alfalfa doesn't do well with huge amounts of rain...like we've had. Our Grell Farm has a number of dedicated acres of wild prairie grass, including 33 acres of native grass that has never been tilled. This latter field has not been put up for hay yet; sometimes we get as many as 75-80 round bales.

Did You Ever Notice? For most priests and parishes, it is standard procedure for the priest to greet people after Mass as they depart. Sometimes, too, it is an opportunity to ask a quick question or to set up a time to visit later about something. My first parish had several priests, with me serving as a deacon. Our pastor wanted us all to be available after Mass to greet people. We even had assigned places to stand because of the many exit doors from this particular church in Lincoln. *** Since I am the only priest here, I try to switch to different places to extend my greetings after Mass. You may have noticed me doing this. It doesn't apply quite as much at St. Joseph's, since most people exit toward Derby Avenue rather than into the parking lot through the door near the restrooms. So, for people at St. Mary's, if you see me at a different exit than your usual one, please know that I am trying to spread myself out, week-by-week, so that I may greet as many people as possible over a period of time.

Living Liturgically September 8th is customarily the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Since it falls on a Sunday this year, the feast is not celebrated in liturgically. However, we can celebrate it devotionally, by remembering Mother Mary being born as a baby to Jesus' grandparents, Saints Joachim and Anne. We can think of Joachim and Anne holding baby Mary with awe, realizing they were past the usual age to have a child. Many churches and shrines depict Mary as a child with her mother, Anne, and they are studying the Scriptures together. We can take time on this Sunday, September 8th, to do the same. *** (It happens also that September 8 is my little brother's 45th birthday...he was born on a Sunday morning around 3:30 a.m. As Dad got Mary and I ready for Mass at St. Joe's in Beatrice, I remember my sister crying because she wanted a baby sister so badly. I, however, was pretty pumped to have a brother!)

God Bless You!

Father Grell