

From the Pastor—January 12, 2020

Adoration Schedule Adoration this week in St. Mary's is on Wednesday, January 15, 8:00 – 9:00 p.m.; and in St. Joseph's on Thursday, January 16, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Wedding in Alexandria Last Saturday, January 4th, I attended a wedding in Alexandria of a couple who I prepared for marriage. The new couple is Sydne (Endorf) and Cameron Sims, and they reside in Aurora and attend St. Mary's—congratulations to them! *** It was quite joyful for me to see the completion of our meetings by witnessing their vows of marriage. Being there was also joyful on several other levels. *** I was able to spend quality time with my classmate from seminary, Father John Birkel. A native of David City, he and I, along with Father Brouillette and Dietrich, were ordained together as the Class of 1996 for our Diocese. Father Birkel, who cares for the churches in Fairbury and Alexandria, and I enjoyed talking at the wedding reception. *** January 4th marked my second-ever trip to St. Mary's Church in the Village of Alexandria. I had attended a wedding there of my mother's first cousin when I was a child. I wasn't sure when that wedding happened, so I mentioned it to the Acolyte in the sacristy prior to Sydne and Cameron's wedding. He said, "Well, I was here for that wedding, too; the bride was my sister!" Small, small world! It was fun to find out that his sister is married to my mom's first cousin, and that he (and I) were both at that wedding, 45 years ago. *** One of the ushers for the wedding was a young man, last name of Ostdiek, who I watched grow up when I was pastor at Lawrence. Yes, he is related to Andrew Ostdiek of our St. Mary's, Aurora, although somewhat down the line and on a different family branch. *** The wedding reception of Mr. and Mrs. Cameron and Sydne Sims was held in the Tobias Gym. From Alexandria, which is the easternmost part of Thayer County, it was probably 7 miles on pavement plus another 9 on gravel to reach the reception in Tobias, which is in the westernmost part of Saline County (if you are not native to Nebraska, you might note that we pronounce this county as "suh-LEEN" rather than the way a salty solution is pronounced, i.e. "SAY-leen"). On the way there, I passed the South Tobias cemetery, where my great-uncle Ervin Rut is buried. I remember well his funeral in 2002; I had to walk around a while before I found his grave to pray there. *** The Tobias gym brought back a flood of memories. We had family reunions there a time or two when I was a kid. You see, my grandmother Emilie (Rut) Hajek grew up east and north of Tobias. The son of the aforementioned John and Donna Rut and his family live on the old farmstead; they have done an exemplary job to preserve the house and farmyard the way it was in my grandma's childhood. *** Finally, at the wedding, a couple walked in who I had prepared and married at Lawrence. Turns out they are friends to friends of the bride. Small-world, Nebraska is: you've got to love it! *** If you see Cameron and Sydne Sims, wish them a warm welcome to our community as they begin married life and love together. *** I hope you enjoyed Father Joseph Bernardo, who celebrated the 5:00 Mass on Saturday, in my absence. He serves as the chaplain of Pius X High School in Lincoln and resides at our Cathedral. Did he talk about his native homeland of Guam?

New Year's Eve with Matt Maher Fans of Catholic praise and worship music will recognize the name of artist Matt Maher. I saw him a year ago at FOCUS's SEEK conference in Indianapolis. I live-streamed much of the Student Leadership Summit (SLS) of FOCUS held in Phoenix and was overjoyed to be as if there as Matt Maher and his

band brought in the new year of 2020. Phoenix is in Mountain Standard Time, and I watched most all of the hour-plus long concert beginning around midnight, our time.

The Catholic Corner I have begun an endeavor which gives me joy; it "fills my bucket," as the saying goes. I started a newspaper column called "The Catholic Corner." It debuted in the Aurora News-Register last week. **DISCLAIMER:** Due to a generous gift from my parents, this column is funded by me, personally, and reflects no expense to St. Mary's or St. Joseph's parishes. *** In the column, I hope to write a short reflection on some aspect of Catholic life. It seems that in every age of Church history, people confusion about what the Catholic Church is and what she teaches. I hope to write a cheerful description of Catholic life in this column. I am grateful for the opportunity!

Manger Lesson, Epiphany Blessing Ask students of our K-8 CCD classes what they learned about Jesus being born in manger and how that applies to our eating of the Lord's Body and Blood in Holy Communion. The students also helped me pray the Epiphany blessing of the Three Wise Men upon the doorways of our church and hall.

Five Masses, 14 Days Beginning December 23rd at my aunt's funeral in Oklahoma through to Sunday, January 5th, I celebrated five prominent and holy Masses within 14 days' time. If I have seemed a bit weary to you, please know that offering Mass is very draining upon a priest's energy because of Him to Whom we are offering the sacrifice.

Nebraska, A Pro-Life State Our governor is proclaiming January 22 a statewide day of prayer to recognize that Nebraska is a pro-life state. See reverse of this sheet for the full wording of Gov. Ricketts' proclamation.

Walk for Life Nebraska's Walk for Life will take place this Saturday, January 18. On the 22nd day of January, 1973, the United States Supreme Court ruled in the companion decisions of Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton that abortion in all nine months of pregnancy would become legal in all 50 States of the Union. Please do not miss this point: it is legal in our nation to kill a child in the womb via a procured (desired) abortion up till the point of birth. As a catchy slogan I saw once says, "The USA: the home of the free, if only all were free to be born." *** Are you willing to go to Lincoln and make your pro-life presence known to our State's elected officials? Are you willing to go to Lincoln to show to everyone who sees you that you are pro-life? I would desire that great representation from our parishes would make the trek to Lincoln on January 18th. Men in the Knights of Columbus, women in the Altar Societies, young men and women in Godteens, parish leaders, parish catechists; all of you are welcome, and even necessary, to attend the Walk. *** The Walk begins with a brief outdoor program at 10:00 a.m. on the north steps of the State Capitol at 15th & K Streets and continues by marching down 14th Street to the UN-L Student Union for the keynote speech by Jennifer & Jeff Christie at Noon. The event concludes at 1:00 p.m. Parking is available around the Capitol and in downtown parking stalls & garages for a fee.

Continued New Year Blessings to You!!!

Father Grell