

From the Pastor—October 18, 2020

Parish Debt Paid Off With our Covid times, it is difficult to aptly capture the joy and the pride that St. Mary's ought to have in having this month paid off our entire debt to the Diocese. While we as a parish need to celebrate this remarkable accomplishment in a proper way, I at least want this bulletin note to suffice for getting the word out there. One detail I can share is that the loan for our 2014 remodel of the church and hall was scheduled to last for 10 years, until 2025. Paying it off a full five years early, amidst Covid, is truly a feat that we all ought to be most proud of. Call it a miracle of grace! A miracle at 9th and P Streets, Aurora! Please know of my thanksgiving and esteem. Congratulations!!!

Looking to the Church The Church and her people have been through tough times in the past. Imagine the early Christians, about a hundred years after Jesus' saving death and resurrection. They faced persecutions from the civil government to practice their faith. They didn't have the modern amenities like instant communication, which we have. The following words are meant to be read for us as Christians of today to show that, while we are struggling and challenged in many ways, the Church has always weathered the storm, and will this time, too.

This is from a report given to the emperor Hadrian in the year 130. It was written by a non-Christian named Aristides who studied Christians on behalf of the emperor. Here is what he said: "The Christians love one another. They never fail to help widows; they save orphans from those who would hurt them. If a person has something, he gives freely to the one who has nothing. If they see a stranger, Christians take him home and are happy, as though he were a real brother. They don't consider themselves brothers in the usual sense, but brothers instead through the Spirit of God. If one of them is poor and there isn't enough food to go around, they fast for several days to give him the food he needs. This is really a new kind of person. There is something divine in them."

Aristides goes on to say: "There is something extraordinary about their lives. They live in their own countries as though they were only passing through. They play their full role as citizens, but labor under all the disabilities of aliens. Any country can be their homeland, but for them their homeland, wherever it may be, is a foreign country. They pass their days upon earth, but they are citizens of heaven."

Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. Stay well, stay strong, in Christ!

Family Wedding I was blessed last Saturday to have Father Joe Bernardo come out from Lincoln to preside at the 5:00 p.m. Mass. He is a delightful man; I am sure you enjoyed him. I was invited to and attended a family wedding at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Omaha. For those of you not familiar with Omaha parishes, St. Vincent's is located on West Maple (Highway 64) on the way out of Omaha toward Elkhorn. It was a 125-mile for me to get there. I really enjoyed myself and my cousin's family. The groom in the wedding, a non-relative to me, is about 35 years old. His parents are both in advanced dementia and did not attend the wedding or reception. This made me sad; it is surely a cross to this young man

that he couldn't share the joy of his bride with his mom and dad. *** The parish pastor and the deacon who were scheduled to lead the wedding Mass both came into contact with Covid-sufferers. So, even though I had not been planning for this, I ended serving as the priest-celebrant and preacher of the wedding homily! It worked out well; I was glad to serve and help.

Census Each year in early October, the Diocese asks us to take a census count of people attending Mass. We do this for two consecutive weekends. For St. Joseph, Giltner, out of a total parish population of men, women, and children of 139 people, we had 51 attending on October 4th and 35 on October 11th. For St. Mary, Aurora, out of a total parish population of men, women, and children of 713 people, we had 117 attending on October 4th and 111 on October 11th. The Diocese realizes, of course, that with the dispensation in effect from attending Sunday Mass that our numbers are going to be lower. I certainly realize this too.

Holy Hour for Election I will lead a holy hour for our country on Sunday, November 1st, at St. Mary's. We will pray for the elections and for our nation to keep its focus upon Jesus Christ and all things godly. We will seek Mother Mary's intercession through a recited Rosary. Please join us, St. Mary's and St. Joseph's families, from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Spending the Lord's Day With You Could I visit with St. Mary's or St. Joseph's parishioners for a one-hour visit? This could be at your home or in our parish hall. Please call, text, or e-mail me for the Sunday that works for you. Here are the dates/times to choose from:

October 18	5:00 p.m.
October 25	5:00 p.m.

God Bless You!!!

Father Grell