

From the Pastor—February 16, 2020

Adoration Schedule Adoration this week in St. Mary's on Wednesday, February 19, 8:00 – 9:00 p.m.; Adoration in St. Joseph's on Thursday, February 20, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Welcome to Les Mach! This weekend, I am happy to welcome a gentleman named Les Mach to speak at our Masses. Les works for the Catholic Foundation of Southern Nebraska. This entity, technically, is distinct from the Diocese of Lincoln as much as any foundation (for a school, a museum, a library, etc.) is distinct from the entity it supports. Les travels around the Diocese to help people to be generous and shrewd caretakers of their financial and material blessings. I have learned a lot from Les over the years, and I think you might, too. He is not trying to sell you anything; rather, he is a free asset to you to help you sort through questions you have about the blessings from your work and wealth which you have accumulated, by God's grace, over the years.

CCD Mass Last week, our CCD Mass was beautiful! I invite/encourage you to attend one of these Masses, as you will be edified by our youth. I try to tailor my homily to fit the experience of the youth, more so than I can on a Sunday homily. I somehow worked in the following topics in my homily: Orson Welles' famed War of the Worlds broadcast from 1938 ("don't be afraid of Martians!"); the Houston Astros sign-stealing scandal of 2017; the myth of overpopulation; gender dysphoria (boys can't change to become girls, and girls can't change to become boys). Here are some sights and sounds from the Mass or before/after it:

SEEN: two reverent altar servers who knew for Whom they served.

HEARD: a good reader, mastering words like "retinue" and "Sheba".

HEARD and SEEN: "Father, we just studied War of the Worlds in school! He had to make a global apology!"

SEEN and barely HEARD: tiny feet of tiny KinderKids and 1st graders taking up tiny places in the pews.

HEARD: changing adolescent men's voices in the Mass responses and songs.

SEEN: a high school youth praying silently in church before other classmates arrived and without being told to by anyone.

HEARD: the same tiny people referenced above using BIG voices to join in with saying the Lord's Prayer, just like the BIG kids!

SEEN and HEARD: lead singers who love to sing leading us in singing with full heart and voice.

Parish Council Highlights Here are some abbreviated notes on our St. Mary's Parish Council meeting last week: 1) Profit/Loss statement from July 1, 2019 – January 31, 2020 was studied; 2) Balance sheet as of January 31, 2020 was studied; 3) Schedule to train altar servers was discussed; 4) Godteens Mission Trip meeting showed 9 students, so far, interested in participating in the summer of 2021; 5) Godteens breakfast from February 9th brought in a free-will offering of \$281; 6) The last pictorial directory (for both St. Mary's and St. Joseph's) was published in 2015, and 2020 would make sense to make a new directory; 7) A pathway toward the bathroom rectory renovation seems much closer as per financial health being on more solid ground; 8) The Seven Sisters Apostolate to pray for me as your parish priest will be re-started in a couple of weeks; 9) Two couples are in marriage prep with me and one person will come into full communion with the Catholic

Church from RCIA; 10) Ceiling tiles and the replacement thereof for the parish hall was discussed; 11) The Knights of Columbus have upcoming events of the Spaghetti Feed and a Fish Fry; 12) First Holy Communion Sunday will be April 5th (Palm Sunday), with a specially-scheduled Mass at 10:30 a.m., in addition to the normal 8:15 a.m. Mass, with a coverage priest to go to St. Joseph's on that day for 10:45 a.m. Mass (got all that☺); 13) The possibility of switching the altar candles from beeswax to oil-burning was discussed and tabled.

Save The Date! The Loving Life Coalition is excited to bring pro-life speaker Rebecca Kiessling to Hamilton County. Set aside Saturday afternoon, March 14, for Rebecca's talk at the Christian Resource Center, Giltner.

Catholic Press Month Please use the envelope in your packets to help defray the cost for our 100% parish subscription to the Southern Nebraska Register. The cost is only \$15/year.

Ash Wednesday is February 26th
Schedule...feedback? I am proposing for Ash Wednesday, February 26, that our Mass schedule will be: 12:10 p.m. at St. Mary's; 5:30 p.m. at St. Joseph's; and 7:00 p.m. at St. Mary's. Remember, this day is NOT one of the six Holy Days of Obligation. Last year, I had a Service of the Word of God at St. Joseph's, with distribution of ashes, but no Mass. I don't think I liked that format very well. I hope that by scheduling Mass at 5:30 p.m. at St. Joseph's that parishioners who commute could get home in time. Also, by not having an early morning Mass at St. Mary's, I am hoping that high school students, and educators and other early morning workers, would be able to attend the 7:00 p.m. Mass. Let me know what you think of what I am thinking; it could be that I schedule the final draft a little differently based upon what you tell me. Stay tuned.

Plan ahead to Fast and Abstain Remember to plan ahead for next week that February 26 (Wednesday) is a day of fasting and abstinence, while February 28 (Friday) is a day of abstinence. I think our local schools provide meatless options for lunches. The abstinence law of the Church only applies under pain of sin to those who are 14 years old and older...some of you in the 8th and 9th grade range, this might be your first abstaining Lent. Fasting applies to those who are 18 years old through to age 59.

Lent Look-Ahead I am going to plan for Stations of the Cross to be held on Friday evenings, alternating between St. Mary's and St. Joseph's. I hope to add a movie/video time of learning and fellowship on Sundays. Look to next week's bulletin for the details.

Jesus: The Way, the Truth, and the Life Our consistent and successful Women's Book/Bible Study has announced its plan for Lent, as seen elsewhere in this bulletin. Would the men of the parish be interested in the same DVD-based study, perhaps in a morning time slot, like 6:00 – 7:00 a.m.? I would need one or two "leads" before I could commit our parish to this. The time can be negotiated, as well as the day of the week. Please talk to me.

God Bless You!!!

Father Grell