

From the Pastor—February 9, 2020

Adoration Schedule Adoration this week in St. Mary's on Wednesday, February 12, 8:00 – 9:00 p.m. Adoration in St. Joseph's on Thursday, February 13, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

A Splendidifforous Day! OK, so that's not a word, as my spell-check function took occasion to remind me. But it describes how cool of a day, liturgically, was last week's February 2nd Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. I have stated in this column before about how processions are a big deal in our Catholic faith, and about how such processions for a time period in the 1970's-1990's seemed all but forgotten in the Church, especially in the United States. February 2nd in our Breaking Bread missals included instructions for how to begin the Mass with a procession, so that's what we did at the Sunday morning Masses last weekend. I also led a variation of a procession at the Saturday vigil Mass at St. Mary's. I want to thank the youth of our parishes who, on short notice, were present to help us all enter into the processions. The idea of a procession on the Feast of the Presentation is show how Jesus as the Light of the Word was brought into the Temple by Mary and Joseph. February 2nd is the 40th day after Christmas, and so the symbolism is of Mary being purified of ritual impurity due to having given birth to Our Savior as well as Jesus visiting his Father's house as an infant. The procession is a signpost, if you will, of our living of our baptismal promise to be a light shining in the darkness of this world. In former times, and still valid today, is to refer to this day as "Candlemas"...is that familiar-sounding to you? On Candlemas Day, the priest would bless candles for the people of God to be taken home and lit for family prayers; also, like in my family, people would use these blessed candles during times of storm or other times of special needs. I could bless candles that you have, anytime, but Candlemas is the day which is most proper. *** February 2 usually does not fall on a Sunday. The procession and candle-blessing are only seen by those who can attend daily Mass. This made me even more want to celebrate it with you all. *** To add to our festive celebration, I also wanted to impart the blessing of throats in honor of the Feast of St. Blaise. Like with processions, the throat blessing attributed to this saint has at times disappeared from Catholic consciousness. St. Blaise (sometimes spelled Blasé) is known for having performed a miracle which saved a young boy from choking to death. As with all blessings, this sacramental of the Church must be received with faith. In other words, if people either don't get sick, or do get sick, after receiving the blessing, one's disposal to accepting the gracious gift of God via the blessing is what really matters.

Super Super Bowl! About 10 of us priests gathered at St. Joseph Rectory in Geneva to watch the Super Bowl. Not surprisingly, we were all pulling for the Chiefs! We commented about Catholic connections, such as that kicker Harrison Butker lives his Catholic faith out loud. One of the priests enjoys cooking, and so he served up generous portions of pasta and all the sauces and trimmings. The room grew steadily grimmer as the 4th quarter clock ticked down to 12 minutes...11 minutes...10 minutes left to go. And that's when the Mahomes Magic began! It still seems incredible as I type this that the Chiefs came back! It was so subtle to me; it was almost like the fans were surprised, and the TV commentators were surprised, all of us thinking, "is this really happening?" Those who have followed the Chiefs' journey were probably not as surprised as I. *** I saw a cartoon written from a Nebraska viewpoint where the humor was

made upon a man watching the Super Bowl, dressed in red, and mistaking the Chiefs as if they were the Huskers and that NU had just won the national championship! *** It was good for us as priests to be together. We ranged in age from about 30 to 85, but the priestly fraternity breaks down generational differences.

Tour With 2nd Grade The First Holy Communion class this year totals 10 children, nine from St. Mary's and one from St. Joseph's. I gathered the parents for a meeting this past week, after which I took the students on a tour of the confessionals. They were SO excited to see the inside of these strange, boxed rooms. Would that all of us were as excited to visit these rooms and walk out with our sins forgiven! Hoping to make the confessional not as imposing, I strove to make the tour as uplifting and lightweight as I could. I entertained many questions, and I spoke to the students from my middle room to them in the side rooms. They thought this was great fun...it will, of course, be much more solemn when it is just he or she, the student, facing the screen to state his or her sins for real. But for the time being, it was a great learning time.

CCD Reprisal I want to give a sort of reprisal of how our CCD staffing is shaping up at the current time. I like for you to know who is doing the "heavy-lifting" of trying to cover the many points of curriculum as given us by the Diocese. For St. Mary's and St. Joseph's, our CCD coordinator is Annie De La Cruz and our Godteens coordinators are Tim and Molly Elge. Teachers and assistants includes: Kindergarten—Haley Sigler; First grade—Paula Johnson; Second grade—Linda McQuiston and Barb Bonifas; Third grade—Brooke Hanna; Fourth grade—Tracy Schutt; Fifth grade—Barbie Mickey and Megan Dubas; Sixth grade—Carey McCoy; Seventh grade—Jana Gibson; Eighth grade—Don Schmit. For our Godteens' sponsors, we have: Freshmen—Jacob and Chelsea Arendt; Sophomores—Jeremy and Megan Sharp; Juniors—Greg and Jill Myers; and Seniors—Keli Margritz. *** Thank you, one and all!

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, to see Rebecca speak at the Christian Resource Center, Giltner.

Upcoming Dates Ash Wednesday is February 26th!
World Marriage Day The idea of celebrating marriage began in Baton Rouge, La., in 1981, when couples encouraged the Mayor, the Governor and the Bishop to proclaim St. Valentine's Day as "We Believe in Marriage Day". The event was so successful, and the idea was adopted by Worldwide Marriage Encounter's Leadership. By 1982, 43 Governors officially proclaimed the day and celebrations spread to U.S. military bases in several foreign countries. In 1983, the name was changed to "World Marriage Day", designated to be celebrated each year on the second Sunday in February. In 1993, his Holiness, Pope John Paul II, imparted his Apostolic Blessings on World Marriage Day. WMD celebrations continue to grow and spread to more countries and faith expressions every year.

God Bless You!!!

Father Grell