

From the Pastor—March 8, 2020

Adoration Schedule Adoration this week in St. Mary's on Wednesday, March 11, 8:00 – 9:00 p.m. Adoration in St. Joseph's on Thursday, March 12, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

CCD Lesson I had an enjoyable time teaching our K-8 students last Wednesday. Kudos to you wonderful parents who are seeking Jesus to be in the lives of your families! I utilized our projector technology in the parish hall to show the musical video of the song “40” by Catholic musician Matt Maher. I spoke to the students how we must, like Jesus, live these 40 days to grow closer to God and to strengthen ourselves for Christian discipleship. I gave a short explanation of the three primary ways of living Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. The biggest reaction from the students on these three Lenten modes of living is when I explained that I have friends who willingly take cold showers/baths during Lent. When we have self-control over our bodies through what we eat and how we treat ourselves, it helps our Lenten fast to be stronger and our prayer more powerful. It can also help us in giving alms, i.e. the financial expense of heated bath water is decreased, leaving more resources to help the poor and needy. My second main topic was to address and explain the Stations of the Cross, which we were going to pray later in our evening. I explained how Christians from the very beginning have walked where Jesus walked as he carried the Cross. Where Our Lord fell the first time is deputed to be a place where the sewage of Jerusalem would have been routed to leave the city limits. Through our meditative prayer of Our Lord's walk through the streets of Jerusalem to Calvary, we grow in our love for how much Jesus loves us. I showed a picture of one of our St. Mary's Stations and explained how the Stations of each Catholic church are different in style and composition. At the end of praying Stations, I told the students that for their friends who love Jesus, but aren't Catholic, to be proud to tell them that we prayed the Stations of the Cross, following in the footsteps where Jesus walked.

First Confession/Reconciliation For Leap Year Day, our First Holy Communion class “leapt” over their sins into the arms of Jesus' loving forgiveness! It was a great day! Father Matt Rolling from the seminary in Seward came and assisted me in ministering to the students and family members who wanted to receive God's mercy. We have 10 members in the second-grade class, nine from St. Mary's and one from St. Joseph's. It was very profound and satisfying to see that the students understood the message I gave them about Holy Confession. At their age, without adult inhibitions and filters, their young minds are able to see the truth and be attracted to it in the knowledge of admitting their sins and confessing them. I am so proud of this class!

Statisticals On the reverse of this sheet, please find a current snapshot of our statistical information. Any of you who have experience with analyzing databases know better than I about how to glean information from them. Over time, now that I am almost three years with you, I would like to take a closer look at our numbers. Perhaps with those of you who know our parishes well, I could update and make more accurate our statistical information. I hope you enjoy this first attempt at reporting to you where we stand.

Nick! Every so often, a priest receives a blast from the past in the form of a person who he knew long ago and far away reappears in the here and now. It happened to me last weekend. This person was in the public eye, so you may remember him. His name is Nick Benes, and he and his wife and son were at St. Mary's last weekend for Holy Mass. Nick

came up and didn't think I would recognize him. I give credit to Facebook in that it helps me to place people and identify them as I happen across their social media pages. Nick was in about 3rd or 4th grade when I was appointed pastor of Assumption Church, Dwight, in 1999. His dad was an acolyte; his mom taught CCD. They were good parishioners. Nick and his brothers learned to altar serve when I was at Dwight. I think there were three boys, and then a gap of a few years, and then two daughters. I recall that I baptized at least one of those two daughters. After I left Dwight in 2005, Nick grew up and went to school to study journalism. And it is this background of academic study which landed him in Aurora, as a reporter for our county paper, the News-Register. Nick has a similar job in northeast Nebraska now. He happened to be traveling for the weekend and stopped by; it was great to see him!

Are You Pro-Life, except for...? The Loving Life Coalition of Hamilton County is excited to bring pro-life speaker Rebecca Kiessling to the Christian Resource Center, east of Giltner. The date is Saturday, March 14, at 2:00 p.m. Rebecca was conceived through an unspeakable assault upon her mother. Rebecca's mom, in discovering she was pregnant, sought an abortion. At the time, 1969, abortions were illegal in most of the United States. Her mom tried at least two places to abort Rebecca, but circumstances (i.e. God's Providence) did not allow it. Rebecca told me by phone that her talk will not make parents feel uncomfortable in bringing your children. The phrase “I am pro-life, except in cases of rape” has gained an almost mythical status, such that many think it to be a clear-cut true statement; one has only to look at the life that God has granted to Rebecca to see that this myth is solidly debunked. As horrific as non-consensual, sexual assault is, it is only made more horrific when pregnancies which occur are terminated through a procured abortion. As discomfoting as this approach might settle in your heart and mind, I hope you see the truth of what I am getting at. A person's a person, no matter how small...and no matter how they were conceived.

Lenten Suggestions Here is an abbreviated reprisal of my suggestions for your Lenten devotions: Attend Daily Mass; Receive Holy Communion often; Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation; Pray the Rosary; Pray, out loud, with your family; Spend more time praying than looking at a screen; Fast (give up) something good which you overemphasize over God; Fast from sinning; Be kind, kinder, kindest; Sunday Film Series from our parishes' Formed.org subscription; Stations of the Cross & Confessions; Weekly Holy Hour; Jesus: Way, Truth, and Life Study Groups on DVD; Join Legion of Mary, as an active or auxiliary member; Join Knights of Columbus; Be Active in Altar Society. And from the heart of Pope Francis: Read. The. Bible. If you do this, you will grow in love of God and neighbor.

God Bless You!!!

Father Grell