

From the Pastor—August 2, 2020

Spiritually Starving—No. 7 This week, we turn to paragraph 1334 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. *“In the Old Covenant bread and wine were offered in sacrifice among the first fruits of the earth as a sign of grateful acknowledgment to the Creator. But they also received a new significance in the context of the Exodus: the unleavened bread that Israel eats every year at Passover commemorates the haste of the departure that liberated them from Egypt; the remembrance of the manna in the desert will always recall to Israel that it lives by the bread of the Word of God; their daily bread is the fruit of the promised land, the pledge of God’s faithfulness to his promises. The ‘cup of blessing’ at the end of the Jewish Passover meal adds to the festive joy of wine an eschatological dimension: the messianic expectation of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. When Jesus instituted the Eucharist, he gave a new and definitive meaning to the blessing of the bread and the cup.”*

I think it’s important to remember that when the Apostles sat at the Last Supper, they would have realized that Jesus was going “off-script” from a usual Passover meal. He was doing something different, something new. Our Lord even used the word “new” for the covenant which he was making with them.

But this newness did not obliterate all semblance of the old way. For the Lord used bread, and wine, which were both used in the traditional Passover meal. These offerings were also common sacrifices prior to the original Passover out of Egypt.

Isn’t it interesting that bread and wine are still common (and enjoyable) foods in the 21st century? You go to many sit-down restaurants and you look forward to the type of bread they will serve. You sit with a table of good friends and you see that this is an occasion to share wine together.

These gifts of bread and wine, then, are meant for us to see God’s active presence among us at each and every Mass. What would a Catholic service be like without the bread and wine changed into the Eucharist? It would still have the Word of God, but it would feel incomplete. If there were no Eucharistic Prayer; if we read the Bible, and then prayed the Lord’s Prayer, and then had the parish announcements...and then went home, something would seem to be missing. I think we are hard-wired to desire that Eucharistic sacrifice of the bread and wine.

I hope to continue these Catechism paragraphs and commentary into the future. My commentary is in regular print, while the precise text of the Catechism is italicized.

Two Bishops at Burial Our St. Joseph, Giltner, Catholic Cemetery witnessed a historical and perhaps unprecedented sight last Tuesday: two bishops were present at the burial of Father Don Larmore. A priest’s funeral and burial is usually celebrated by the bishop of the diocese where that priest served. Father Don was a Grand Island priest, and so Bishop Joseph Hanefeldt was the main celebrant of his services. Bishop Emeritus William Dendinger (Bishop D.) was also present, as he knew Father Don quite well also. In addition, there were several Grand Island Diocese priests who attended the burial, including Father Marty Egging, Father James Janovec, and Father Thomas Ryan. I believe there were a few religious sisters present, too. Bishop Hanefeldt led us, priests and religious, in the

singing of the Salve Regina at the end of the burial prayers. This is the Hail Holy Queen prayer arranged in Latin chant. It was truly a beautiful time of prayer as we placed Father Don’s remains in the sacred ground where he will await the Lord’s second coming at the end of time.

My Parents’ Anniversary Friday, July 24, was the day of my parents 55th wedding anniversary. With Dad doing rehab at the Good Samaritan skilled nursing home in Beatrice, and with visitation limited due to Covid, we weren’t sure how it would all work out. But the Good Sam arranged that two people could visit Dad. My siblings nominated me to go in with Mother. This was the first time in person that Mom and Dad had had since June 23. Daddy said, “I almost had to cry when I saw you!” We had about an hour-long visit. I took pictures and did Facetime on my phone to include Mary and Mark. I prayed the prayer from the Book of Blessings for couples on their anniversary, thereby blessing my parents. After about an hour, Dad was taken back to his room while we kids took my mom out for ice cream. My siblings gave my mother a bouquet of roses. I went down to the farm with Mother, and we looked at our crops. For dryland, we are having a pretty good year. The ears of corn are forming up nicely, and the beans are blooming and some have tiny, itty-bitty pods taking shape. *** It was a good day in Gage County.

New Day Off Each priest receives a day off each week. This is because we work on the weekends (which we are blessed to do). Each priest is asked to choose a day, Monday through Friday, in which he occupies himself with something other than the prescribed responsibilities of his assignment. In my priesthood, I have taken Tuesdays as my day off for about the first 10 years. When I served at Lawrence, it became advantageous to take Monday as my day off. For a variety of reasons, I have decided as of August, 2020, to return to Tuesdays as my day off. I am at peace with the change. It seems like quite often there will be some important parish event that almost demands my time on a Monday. It will be a change, yet a good thing.

The Next Two Saturdays This weekend’s Saturday, and next’s, August 1 and 8, I will be attending weddings. I have asked Father Chris Barak to come and offer Mass in my place. I will not be away overnight.

New Handrails I have noticed at the rectory that the front door and back door could each use handrails. Each is a three-step ascent from the sidewalk; our insurance company generally recommends that three steps require a railing for safety. The back door, especially, needed a guard rail for the complete drop-off that was present. When people have come to my front door, not a few have felt and looked for a handrail...to no success. That’s all taken care of now; thank you for the Knights of Columbus for overseeing this project to completion.

Assumption is Non-obligatory This Year The Holy Day of the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary does not carry an obligatory call to attend Mass this year, since August 15th falls on a Saturday. I will celebrate the Assumption by offering Mass in both parishes.

God Bless You!!!

Father Grell