

## **From the Pastor—August 30, 2020**

**Spiritually Starving—No. 11** Here are paragraphs 1341 and 1342 from the Catechism:

*The command of Jesus to repeat his actions and words "until he comes" does not only ask us to remember Jesus and what he did. It is directed at the liturgical celebration, by the apostles and their successors, of the memorial of Christ, of his life, of his death, of his Resurrection, and of his intercession in the presence of the Father. From the beginning the Church has been faithful to the Lord's command. Of the Church of Jerusalem it is written: They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts.*

The quotation from Acts of the Apostles is powerful. Speaking of the time just after Pentecost, the Church in Jerusalem is recorded as doing four things: hearing the apostles' teaching, having fellowship, breaking of the bread, and praying the prayers. Amazingly, the Church of 2020 still does these same four things! Within the Holy Mass, we do what Christians have always done. The apostles' teaching references the four Gospels; the fellowship is the congregation coming together as we do (or as we are able to do outside of times of pandemic); the breaking of the bread happens when the Holy Eucharist is consecrated and distributed; and the prayers are the Eucharistic prayer, the prayer over the gifts, the Lord's Prayer, etc.

This liturgical celebration of Holy Mass is important to hold to in our Catholic faith. The early Christians had the attitude of "we can't not celebrate the Eucharist." Some places and times throughout history have preferred to see the Church as an invisible entity. The reasoning is that we can't see or know God until eternal life, and so we must also not be able to see or know him truly now; there is no visible structure identifiable as the Church. But the liturgy teaches us otherwise. In the Mass, we see and know Jesus in the consecrated Host; we see and know Jesus in his Word proclaimed. We must come together and celebrate the Mass each Sunday. This is a powerful way for us to set our compass on what has mattered to all Christians of all times. We can't fall into the attitude that would say, "oh, we are modern now, we don't need to celebrate the liturgy publicly each week." This is a totally false notion.

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.

### **CCD Report**

**St. Joseph's on Monday** We have seen our enrollment reach about 14-15 students! This is great news, that the Good News of Jesus is reaching these young hearts, and, by extension, their families. I enjoy spending time with the CCD classes, before or after the prescribed times of study. We are blessed to have teachers and sub teachers to dutifully prepare their best presentation and explanation of the Catholic faith.

**St. Mary's on Wednesday** I don't know exact enrollment for St. Mary's yet, but people commented that there were more students who showed up than was expected. This is good! I enjoyed teaching a bit myself, holding class with the 6<sup>th</sup> grade in Classroom C. One of the exciting moments for these students happened when we went to pray at the bell tower toward the end of class. They looked

across the street and recognized a classmate of theirs, who they promptly started waving at and going otherwise crazy about. That student ran across the street (looking both ways, I hope) and had a good time chit-chatting quickly with our St. Mary's kids. I just had to smile at the innocent wonderment of them seeing a classmate who they didn't expect to see.

**Funeral Dinners Resumed** By following certain important restrictions, we have moved to a phase where funeral dinners can once again be celebrated on our parish grounds. It is a sign that we are moving into healing from Covid-19, even though we are still wary of the virus being very much present and infectious. I can answer more questions about this, or our parish leadership can field questions as well. Any provisions by way of the Directed Health Measures could be made stricter and prohibit funeral dinners again, so we are proceeding very cautiously.

**Father Flashbacks** This past week on August 27 marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Bishop Flavin. For those of you of my age, you remember the strong voice and ready and jovial laugh of his Excellency. I recall seeing him at my Confirmation in 1979 and being in awe of him. I also saw him a couple of other times in my youth. When I saw him speak to us as Newman Center students, he helped to seal my desire to enter seminary. To enter officially into seminary studies, the custom was that the Bishop had a one-on-one interview with each young man. I remember that conversation very well. Bishop Flavin exhorted me that the priesthood "is a great life." He did not steer me wrongly; it IS a great life. \*\*\* When he passed away after suffering 11 weeks from a fast-acting cancer in his abdomen, we seminarians had just arrived back in Maryland to begin our school year. We all turned right around to come home for the funeral services of Bishop Flavin. I served as deacon at his funeral Mass; it was quite an honor. \*\*\* Please remember Bishop Flavin in your prayers. He shepherded the Diocese of Lincoln from 1967-1992.

**Fatima Movie** A new movie about Our Lady of Fatima and the three children who saw her was released Friday, August 28. As I understand, it will played in some theaters on a limited basis (because of Covid). It will also be available to stream onto your preferred device. I have seen the trailer for this movie and followed its release; you will enjoy viewing it.

**Readings** Our diocesan newspaper, the Southern Nebraska Register, recently published the Sunday Mass readings for the entire month of August. I took from that publication the idea to publish each Sunday's readings on the reverse side of my From the Pastor column. The way that I thought this would be helpful is that you could pick up your bulletin on the way into Mass and follow along with the readings, in the absence of our missalette/songbooks being in the pews. See if this is something you are interested in. For those reading this column on-line, the same benefit may be realized by seeing the readings on the internet from our web site.

**God Bless You!!!**

**Father Grell**