

## From the Pastor—January 31, 2021



**Catholic Schools Week** This week, January 31 – February 6, is celebrated nationwide as Catholic Schools Week. It is a week to celebrate the great gift of Catholic schools.

**Local Alumni** In our parishes, I have run across a number of parishioners who attended Catholic schools in Nebraska. If you grew up outside of Nebraska, I am not as familiar with your schooling. Here is a list, by no means exhaustive—and I apologize if I missed your school—of the schools represented in our congregations: Lincoln Pius X High School, David City Aquinas, Hastings St. Cecilia, Omaha Marian High School, Grand Island Central Catholic, Humphrey St. Francis, Lindsay Holy Family, Spalding Academy, Lawrence Sacred Heart Elementary, Lincoln Cathedral Elementary School, York St. Joseph Elementary, and Beatrice St. Joseph Elementary.

**Historical** In the 230+ years since our nation was founded, Catholic schools have grown in the United States to an unprecedented level compared to other nations. I believe that a good portion of this growth can be attributed to our founding fathers and the reasons for Americans migrating here to settle the New World. People wanted freedom of religion, freedom to worship in their congregations of choice. While I don't intend this note to paint a comprehensive picture of Catholic school origin and growth, I know that the early bishops of the United States saw concerning qualities of Protestantism in schools. The U.S. bishops wanted to give Catholic students an education based upon Catholic principles. Enter in great educators like St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and St. John Neumann, who trailblazed many foundational Catholic school systems in our country. Fast forward to today, and many teachings of what you might call the religion of secularism have given Catholic schools an ever-valid reason for continuing to grow and educate students.

**My Own Experience** I won't claim that my own Catholic school was perfect; I sometimes had disappointing experiences with fellow students in Beatrice. But I would quickly add that my Catholic faith, lived out within times of discouragement, only served to increase my love and devotion for Jesus and his Church. My education was top-notch. I still remember lessons learned and the Sisters who taught me and Father Danko for his classroom visits and Masses offered. In my priesthood, I have seen Catholic schools as a specially-bonded community of believers which have enhanced my priestly teaching assignments. Being on the staff of Pius X in Lincoln, Aquinas in David City, Sacred Heart in Lawrence, and St. John the Baptist in Plattsmouth

have given me great lessons of loving and being loved.

**How to Celebrate** You might want to show support for our diocesan Catholic schools, or for schools you attended or which your grandchildren/nieces/nephews now attend. Every one of these schools relies on the generosity of its people. This is similar to how every parish also relies upon your donations. You can give of your time and skills, even from afar. In our Diocese of Lincoln, a new initiative of the last couple of years is the Good Shepherd scholarship program. Go to [goodshepherdscholarship.com](http://goodshepherdscholarship.com) to learn more about it.

### **St. Joseph's News Items**

**Mowing Parish Grounds** Consider this an advertisement for a mowing position of our church grounds for the coming growing season. We do not have a parish machine, so you would have to provide your own. You would be placed on our parish payroll and report your hours to our parish bookkeeper. You would be asked to keep God's house's exterior looking beautiful, including weekly mowings during times of steady growth. \*\*\* I have been thinking about this position, and it seems we may need to hire a mowing contractor. Would anyone know who might be interested in contracting with us? Who in the Giltner area, either businesses in town or people who live on nearby acreages, have their grass upkeep with mowing companies? If you could help to discover some interest in our job, please let me know.

**Flags in Sanctuary** I have in the past weeks and months studied and tried different arrangements for the U.S. flag and the papal flag in our church. At times, these flags have been behind the wall which juts out every few feet along the side aisles, making the flags not visible to most people. I don't know if anyone has ever been "keeper of the flags" in our parish in recent years? What I am considering lately is to move the flags to the back wall of the sanctuary, on either side of the priest and ministers' chairs, against the brown bricks. Would this be suitable? It would make the flags prominent and visible, as they ought to be.

**New Fire Exit Lights** Our local fire safety company recently installed new fire exit lights in St. Joseph Church and hall. The old ones were so old as to make the batteries needed to light them quite impractical to purchase. We pray we never need to have these fire exit lights used in an emergency...but we now have good lights to help our safety while in church.

**New Library** Our Legion of Mary has provided a diverse supply of books in the cry room at the back of church. Please give some attention to taking (and returning) some good reading material for your spiritual growth.

**Snow Removal Thanks** I am not sure who removes snow in our parking lot and our sidewalks. But I am grateful to you for keeping our church and hall accessible after large snowfalls.

Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today,  
and forever!

**God Bless You!!!**

**Father Grell**