

From the Pastor—February 7, 2021

Sights and Sounds of CCD Kids say (and do) the darndest things. At St. Mary's CCD last week, a young student entered the parish hall, threw out her arms wide, and announced, "I'm here!" It gave a joyful beginning to the night of learning. *** At St. Joseph's CCD, I have admired the bulletin board material and crafts that the students have done. If you are ever driving around Giltner, feel free to stop by and see the hall. *** St. Mary's held a First Holy Communion parent meeting for the 14 students in second grade. It was well-attended; I think the students enjoyed sitting beside their mom and/or dad. The youth were very quiet and attentive as I presented the upcoming dates and descriptions of the coming events. *** I stopped by a couple of classrooms after the parent meeting. I enjoyed seeing diligent student-work on some Valentine's Day cards for people in long-term care facilities in town. I also happened upon a very giggly class who were enjoying each other's company as they learned about the faith. *** I gave out the blessing of St. Blasé to all of the students and teachers and parents. Rather than individually place the candles and invoke the blessing upon each person, the Covid-pandemic pastorally allows for the words and Sign of the Cross to be done all at once inclusively. We pray in faith that this blessing is truly helpful to all who received it. *** After the St. Blasé blessing, I gave the students a few minutes for Q & A. One young student questioned the St. Blasé story and if it was magic that caused the choking boy to be saved from the fish bone lodged in his throat. I said, no, it is not magic. I compared this miracle of the fish bone to Jesus walking on water, saying that if the Lord has mastery over the earth so as to walk on water, then he can work through saints to show his mastery over all things.

New Saints on Calendar Pope Francis announced last week the creation of new liturgical dates on the universal calendar of the Church. The most noteworthy addition is that along with St. Martha on July 29 will be added the names of her brother and sister, Lazarus and Mary. The feast day will be known as Saints Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. The other saints to be added are a little more obscure than this Bethany family where Jesus stayed and enjoyed their company. They include St. John of Avila, St. Hildegard of Bingen, and St. Gregory of Narek. For purposes of the church calendar that was given away for 2021, these saint days will not appear. Hopefully, the printing presses at the calendar company will allow for them to be placed in the 2022 calendar. The Holy Father by virtue of his office has the authority for actions like changes on the liturgical calendar; it was cool to see this power enacted.

Priest Deanery Day We priests of the York Deanery met together in York this past week for one of our quarterly meetings. We met at St. Joseph Church and School in York. Let me tell that it was so good to be together! Of course, we stayed socially distant and wore masks. I hadn't been in the presence of such a large group of priests since the pandemic began. For most all the brothers there, I hadn't seen or even talked to them since last March. We watched a video together, had some discussion, and those who were able went out to eat. It was a good day.

Bishop Conley on YouTube A friend of mine has informed me in recent days to some podcasts/YouTube videos featuring Bishop Conley. These are interviews based upon some of the key issues of our time, especially in regard to human life and dignity. If you are interested in seeing our

shepherd expound upon these issues, go to YouTube and type "Lincoln Right to Life" in the search bar.

Jesus > Demons Jesus is greater than demons. This was proven in last Sunday's Gospel and is a recurring theme for St. Mark. This great truth, in an age-appropriate way, ought to be something we face squarely. Consider asking me for more holy water, more blessed salt, more prayers to pray against evil. Of course, the Lord's Prayer itself always prays to "deliver us from evil". And the St. Michael prayer is known to parishioners as it is prayed at the end of Masses. Jesus > Demons!

St. Joseph's News Items [re-published]
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