

From the Pastor—March 14, 2021

Pope Francis in Iraq As I was driving home from St. Joseph's Mass last Sunday, the Mass of the Holy Father from Iraq was being broadcasted. It was so cool to hear the different languages being used in the Mass: Chaldean, Aramaic, Kurdish, and others. Pope Francis' journey to this nation was one of particular intrigue to many around the world. He met with the Shiite Grand Ayatollah of Iraq, including a photo of the two which made many appearances in electronic and traditional media. It seems that the Pope's trip to Iraq ought to be something that we take to prayer, for the success of seeds planted while he was there. Pope Francis has a certain culture of encounter about him in which the theological principles are not intended to take the forefront of the conversation. In fact, those precise points of theology/religion are sometimes not even negotiable in a way that is "apples-to-apples". I can envision the intent of Pope Francis, even though his way can seem obscure and fuzzy. He wants dialogue, not necessarily a catechism question-and-answer session. Does this make sense to you, dear reader of the bulletin?

On Vaccines Elsewhere in this bulletin, you can see the link for the Diocese of Lincoln's guidance on vaccines for Covid-19. For different dioceses in the U.S., it seems a vast array of guidance for Covid vaccines is available. As far as what I have read, any of the three "brands" of vaccines in the U.S. are morally acceptable—Moderna, Pfizer, and Johnson & Johnson. At issue is how the vaccines were tested and produced. All of them were tested, clinically, using a cell line from an aborted baby. Johnson & Johnson was both tested and produced with that cell line. Bishops and theologians who are smarter than I point to the closeness of cooperation with the abortion in the past as *not such* to make one morally guilty of aiding and promoting that abortion. *** At the same time, some do not wish to receive the vaccination at all—the Church's teaching allows for this. *** We all know that the Covid-pandemic has produced a great span of diverse and divergent opinions on many levels. It seems to me that we all need to be slow to be rash when addressing what people believe. The same approach applies in our faith life, where we know that Jesus loves us so much as to have died for us. We know that Jesus desires the salvation of all. For our part, we must love Jesus and love all with the best possible motives and actions. *** As Bishop Conley stated in his recent column, we are made for this time. God will get us through the many difficult, and mournful, situations we have experienced. God is good, no matter what. His holy name be praised!

St. Joseph Alignment This Friday, March 19, is the Solemnity of St. Joseph. In some countries, it is a holy day of obligation. This celebration will be the Day of St. Joseph, in the Month of St. Joseph, in the Year of St. Joseph. Pretty cool, yes?! I would encourage you to seek out ways to grow in your love of St. Joseph. Perhaps you can attend Mass at St. Mary's on Friday morning, or attend Stations at St. Joseph's on Friday evening. Perhaps you can the Year of St. Joseph indulgence opportunities. *** To receive a plenary indulgence, you must first have the interior disposition of complete detachment from sin, even venial sin. You must go to confession, receive holy Communion, and offer prayers for the intentions of the pope. If these usual conditions are met, you can receive a plenary indulgence in the Year of St. Joseph, including these several different ways:

- Contemplate on the Lord's Prayer for at least 30 minutes.

- Participate in a spiritual retreat that is at least a day long and includes a meditation on St. Joseph.
- Complete a corporal or spiritual work of mercy.
- Recite the Rosary as a family or as an engaged couple.
- Entrust your day to St. Joseph the worker or seek his assistance in finding a job.
- Recite a prayer in honor of St. Joseph, especially on March 19 or May 1, which are his feast days, the 19th of every month, or on Wednesdays, the day dedicated to his memory.

Prayer: To you, O blessed Joseph

To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our afflictions, and having implored the help of your most holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage also.

Through that charity which bound you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the paternal love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you graciously to regard the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by his Blood, and with your power and strength to aid us in our necessities.

O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ; O most loving father, ward off from us every contagion of error and corrupting influence; O our most mighty protector, be kind to us and from heaven assist us in our struggle with the power of darkness.

As once you rescued the Child Jesus from deadly peril, so now protect God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity; shield, too, each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live piously, to die in holiness, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen.

In case you noticed The red presence candle for the Blessed Sacrament at St. Mary's has a better visibility as of recently. The case of candles I had been using seemed not to have good strength of wick. The candles would burn well for a while but end up with a barely visible flame. Not all the wax burned. My order of new candles was from a different manufacturer, and I am well pleased with the flame visibility and "burnability" of the wax. You may have noticed a more vivid flame to see and notice, which is assuring to us to know that Jesus is truly present in the tabernacle.

Three at St. Joe's I am pleased to tell you that three youth from our First Holy Communion class at St. Joseph's made their First Confession last week. Three is our largest class of youth since I came to be with you in 2017. Congratulations to these students, as they look forward to First Holy Communion on April 18!

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

God Bless You!!!

Father Grell