

## From the Pastor—April 25, 2021

**May Marathon of Rosaries** Pope Francis has directed the universal Church to pray a global Rosary marathon during the month of May for an end to the coronavirus pandemic. The theme, from the Acts of the Apostles, will be “Prayer to God went up incessantly from the whole Church.” The world’s Catholic shrines will be promoters of this Rosary marathon. Individual Catholics, families, and communities are encouraged to participate. Thirty shrines will take turns leading a daily live-streamed Rosary at 12 p.m. Eastern time (11:00 a.m. CDT). Pope Francis will open the month of prayer on May 1, asking for Mary’s intercession. The month of May is always dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

**First Holy Communion, St. Joseph’s** Our Mass for our three First Holy Communicants was beautiful! Receiving Jesus for the first time was a wonderful experience for this class of two girls and one boy.

**First Time Back, Coffees and Rolls!** Both St. Joseph’s and St. Mary’s honored the Holy Communion class with coffee and rolls on April 18. It was obvious that everyone was pretty pumped to gather for this venerable (and yummy!) tradition. The Covid-pandemic has and continues to be monitored very closely by all. But to have a return of this wonderful social time of parish life is a great step forward. Thank you to the doughnut-providers!

**New Servers** Parents of young men in the elementary grades of 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> were recently contacted by e-mail or text, inquiring about their sons participating in altar server training at St. Mary’s. The interest was edifying, with 11 young men attending. The Knights of Columbus Council 8010 provided a pizza dinner for the servers. I was assisted by two of our acolytes. Parents, you may still sign up your sons in the future, as the training is not that arduous to complete for those who want to serve at the altar. Please encourage these new servers when you see them. \*\*\* The Vatican in 1994 allowed for young women to serve at the altar. The policy published at the time indicated that this practice was permitted, but not mandated. The Diocese of Lincoln has chosen over the years not to adopt the permission given, which is the Bishop’s right to decide. The St. Mary’s Parish Council recently voiced concern over this diocesan policy. I hope that you would respect the Bishop’s decision, even if you don’t totally agree with it. Here is an excerpt of the document from 1994 which the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, published about the permission granted on that occasion: *“The Code of Canon Law, paragraph 230, No. 2, has a permissive and not a preceptive character. Hence the permission given in this regard by some Bishops can in no way be considered as binding on other Bishops. In fact, it is the competence of each Bishop, in his diocese, after hearing the opinion of the Episcopal Conference, to make a prudential judgment on what to do, with a view to the ordered development of liturgical life in his own diocese. The Holy See respects the decision adopted by certain Bishops for specific local reasons on the basis of the provisions of Canon 230, 2. At the same time, however, the Holy See wishes to recall that it will always be very appropriate to follow the noble tradition of having boys serve at the altar. As is well known, this has led to a reassuring development of priestly vocations. Thus the obligation to support such groups of altar boys will always continue.”*

**Rectory Construction** Chad Garrett Construction of Aurora began re-modeling the St. Mary and St. Joseph

Rectory bathroom on April 5. It has gone smoothly. I have migrated to the guest room part of the rectory. Significantly, non-designated funds have been donated to each parish that will essentially mean that neither parish has to dip into general funds to pay for this needed project. Thank you!

**Rosary Leaders** We have run a note in the bulletin for many months about the need for Rosary leaders prior to Holy Mass. This is not a calling for everyone, I realize. But reciting the Rosary is a time-honored way for those gathering at Mass to meditate prayerfully on the mysteries of the lives of Jesus and Mary in order to pray well at the Mass. We could use more volunteers; is the Lord calling you to step forward?

**My Memory Lane (1995-1998)** As a run-up to my silver anniversary of ordination, I thought I would take a trip down memory lane with you. My first assignment received from the Bishop was prior to my diaconate ordination in 1995. At that time, I was sent to the Newman Center for residence and responsibilities on Monday – Friday. I was sent to St. Teresa’s in Lincoln for their weekend Masses. Splitting time was somewhat difficult, but very rewarding. I remember learning about this assignment the day that I had planned to go with fellow seminarians to a baseball game of the Baltimore Orioles at Camden Yards. That wonderful trip from my seminary to Baltimore (or “Bal-more”, as native Marylanders say it) was a great way to celebrate this calling to Newman and St. Teresa’s. At my priesthood ordination in 1996, Bishop Bruskewitz had the custom of giving us our assignment letter directly after the Mass was over—I guess he wanted to make sure we accepted the assignment before he ordained us! I was given the Newman Center/St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Lincoln, to serve under Msgr. Leonard Kalin, with teaching duties on the faculty of Pius X High School, where I reported to Superintendent, Father Mike Morin. I remember well the thrill of beginning to be a priest, in real life, after having prepared for it for many years. The Newman Center involved late nights, with the Mass at either 9:00 or 10:00 p.m. The other side of the coin was that Pius required me to report for teaching duties at 9:00 a.m. I had some short nights of sleep in those youthful days! Many times, my lesson planning for sophomore Religion class was honed and modified as I dashed across town, from downtown Lincoln to 6000 A Street. The sophomore students I taught, numbering about 75 over three class periods, were a challenge to me. Having gone to small Wymore Southern High School, I marvelled at 1,000 students as I saw them traverse the hallways at Pius High. I enjoyed learning how to teach; I improved each year I was at Pius. My Newman Center duties included much preaching and many marriage preparations with engaged couples. I helped encourage the students in college to consider religious vocations. I was able to form many fun, healthy relationships with those students, which I maintain to this day. I really learned a lot during those years.

**A Trip Home** I was able to travel to Beatrice to see my parents last week. It was great! I enjoyed it a lot.

**Happy Easter Season! God Bless You!!!**

**Father Grell**