

From the Pastor—May 16, 2021

AHS Senior Godteens Honored at Mass We recognized 10 Aurora High School graduates last Sunday at Mass. These Godteens were led the past four years by Greg and Jill Myers, who welcomed them into their home each week. An engraved Bible was given to each student, a slide show was shown, and coffee and rolls focused on the students and their future plans. Thanks go to Greg and Jill and all who made this a great recognition.

AHS Baccalaureate The baccalaureate ceremony for the 2021 graduates was held on Sunday evening, May 9th. Praise and worship music was provided, and several students gave testimonials. The event was sponsored by the Hamilton County Ministerial Association, from which a couple of area congregational leaders provided reflections. It was a good time to pray and reflect upon the unique journey with the Lord that each student has experienced till now and an encouragement for their future journeys.

Funeral of Lucy Kramer Mrs. Lucy Kramer, wife of Bernie, died last Thanksgiving in Goodyear, Arizona. She was cremated and funeral Mass was held in Arizona. The family contacted me with their plan to come home to Aurora for her burial in the Aurora Catholic Cemetery. The funeral for Lucy was on Saturday, May 8. Lucy and Bernie had run the bowling alley here in Aurora for many years. It was located on the north side of the square, where Aurora Fitness Center is now. Lucy and Bernie were raised in northeast Kansas. This area is familiar to me because of its proximity to my home area. While we mourn Lucy's passing at age 92, it was a good experience to welcome the Kramer family back to Aurora for her burial.

Mother's Day via FaceTime My sister and brother met my mother at dad's nursing home in Beatrice on Mother's Day. They FaceTimed me into the visit, which was very good! It was a simple gathering; Dad was joking with us and enjoying the attention gained by his teasing of us.

Oklahoma Uncle and Cousin Another family gathering happened on Thursday. My Uncle Francis from Oklahoma was in Nebraska, along with his daughter (my cousin), Angela. They spent time with my mom in Beatrice. My sister, brother, and I met them for supper in the Haymarket in Lincoln on Thursday. It was great to get caught up with them. Their vacation was continuing up to Yellowstone; my cousin posted some great pictures on Facebook of their journey to this national treasure.

My Memory Lane (2005-2013) As a run-up to my silver anniversary of ordination, I am taking a trip down memory lane with you. Last week's bulletin spoke of my years as pastor at Assumption Church in Dwight and St. Wenceslaus Church in Bee, as well as teacher at Aquinas/St. Mary's School in David City.

Assigned to Studies An integral part of my priesthood journey involved working toward an advanced degree in education. Many of our diocese's younger priests are asked to go on to further studies after ordination. For me, this meant studying in the Teacher's College at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for a master's degree in Educational Administration. By taking mostly summer classes, it took me nine years to finish the degree. I was pretty overjoyed to graduate from UN-L a second time in December, 2004, with my degree in EdAd.

Sacred Heart School, Lawrence The degree was quickly put into use by Bishop Bruskewitz, who entrusted me to serve as administrator of Sacred Heart School in Lawrence. I began working there in June, 2005. The school

at the time had celebrated a centennial of operations. The landscape before I arrived had shifted greatly. The Lawrence Public School had become part of South Central Unified, which included Superior School, Sandy Creek School, Nelson School, and Guide Rock School. Before I arrived, Guide Rock School ceased operations and Lawrence consolidated to form Lawrence-Nelson School. Some stakeholder families in the former Lawrence area, especially if they lived in Lawrence or west of town, decided to option-enroll their children into the Blue Hill School. When I arrived Sacred Heart School had 31 students in grades K-8. In my next eight years there, the enrollment decreased to 29, 28, 21, 18, and finally 12. Our full-time equivalent (FTE) of faculty was also adjusted to the declining enrollment, from 4.5 FTE to 3.0 or 3.5 FTE. We had combined classrooms, such as grades K-2, 3-5, and 6-8. We had loyal students and families, and an active Home School Association. We were blessed to have the Lawrence-Nelson K-6 learning site welcome us for a 2.5-block walk to take part in their hot lunch program, and their music and physical education classes. Bussing from Lawrence-Nelson was also provided to us, as well as services from their school nurse. As recently as the 1980's and early 1990's, when Sacred Heart School had 90-100 students, the high school students from Lawrence High School would walk over to Sacred Heart Church, during the day, to have catechism classes with the parish priest. It was (and is) a predominantly Catholic area. I really enjoyed working with the students at Sacred Heart, offering daily Mass, monthly confessions, and weekly classroom visits. I also learned a lot about supervising fellow faculty members and interacting with parents. The parishes of Sacred Heart and St. Stephen's each sent their youth to Sacred Heart School. It was a great time for me. Shortly after I left Lawrence, the Bishop made the difficult decision to cease operations at Sacred Heart School. The parish decided to raze the school building. This school provided solid academics and religious formation to generations of Catholics through sacrificial giving of human and financial resources for over 100 years.

Sacred Heart Church The beautiful twin towers of Sacred Heart can be seen from five miles away as you come to Lawrence from the east on Highway 4. The church was dedicated in 1924. During my time in Lawrence, we installed a new roof, keeping the traditional French Ludiwici tile. It was a major project that the people really came through on. We installed an electronic Chimemaster bell system. We installed a wheelchair accessible ramp and started planning the repair of extensive plaster and paint damage to the interior. One day in 2009, lightning struck the east tower, knocking a ginormous piece of masonry to the ground and shorting out electricity to the basement level I felt the lightning in my rectory! We repaired this damage.

St. Stephen's Church This parish of about 40 families was founded in 1875, some two decades prior to Sacred Heart. While Sacred Heart is in the Village of Lawrence, St. Stephen's is 2.5 miles south of town. St. Stephen's had its beginning as a little village, with a post office at one time. St. Stephen's had a K-8 school of its own, which was closed in the early 1980's with the families asked to support Sacred Heart School. During my years, our insurance company required the Bishop to have me hire contractors to perform mold remediation and install a first-time air conditioning system. All Masses and services of St. Stephen's had to be moved to Sacred Heart. This situation lasted about a year. But the good people of St. Stephen's endured resiliently through it all, and we reopened with joy.

Our Lady of Assumption My third parish in this assignment was in Deweese, at Our Lady of Assumption Church. This parish was the largest geographically of the three, including the communities of Deweese, Fairfield, and Edgar and a number of Glenvil addresses. We celebrated Assumption's centennial in 2010, with the Bishop and former pastors attending. Most of the children at Our Lady of Assumption attended Sandy Creek School, located just east of Fairfield on Highway 14. The Deweese parish was founded mainly by those of Czech-Moravian descent, and many of the founders' descendants are still in the parish. In fact, there was previously a second parish in the area, called St. Martin's, Loucky. This Loucky church building was deeded to the Clay County Historical Society in the early 1970's when the Bishop closed the parish. The parish cemetery, however, remains on the rolls of church property, with oversight by the Deweese parish.

Obligation Reinstated Remember, the Bishops of Nebraska have reinstated the Mass obligation for Catholics, beginning May 22-23. In doing so, it is timely to catechize and study why we observe the Lord's Day. See excerpts from such a study, below, by a priest of our Diocese, Father Andrew Heaslip.

Happy Easter Season! God Bless You!!!

Father Grell

A Catechesis on the Third Commandment in Light of the Resurrection

The Third Commandment

In the book of Exodus, we learn that God revealed to the people of Israel on Mt. Sinai the commandment, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work... for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it" (20:8-11).

We see in this text that the third commandment is deeply tied to the six days of creation. In fact, the word sabbath (šabbāt) means the seventh day of the week and a day of rest; it is derived from the Hebrew word šābat which means "to cease or to rest." The idea here is that the Sabbath is the day on which God ceased his work of creation in order to bring rest and blessing to the seventh day. Hence, in the Old Covenant, the observance of the Sabbath entailed, among other things, remembrance of the Lord's work of creation and rest from work and manual labor. Moreover, like all of the Ten Commandments, the third commandment too was given in the context of God's work of liberating or redeeming the people of Israel from slavery.

The Decalogue (Ten Commandments) begins with the words, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Ex 20:2). Likewise, the expression of the third commandment in Deuteronomy adds, "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day" (15:5).

We see here that the third commandment is deeply tied also to God's work of redemption or liberation from slavery, that is, when He freed his people from Egypt and formed a covenant

relationship with them on Mt. Sinai. Hence, in the Old Covenant the obligation of remembrance—"You shall remember"—includes God's work not only of creation but also of redemption.

In the third commandment, then, we not only learn of the sacred importance of the Sabbath and the requirement or obligation to keep it holy through remembrance and rest but also discover the deepest reasons for this obligation: the Sabbath is directly connected to the blessing and holiness of the Lord's work of creation and to the mighty power of His liberating work of redemption.

The extraordinary historical event of the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion, that is, at an unknown moment on the first day of the week, Sunday. Only something this remarkable could have brought about such a change in the deeply rooted religious culture surrounding the Sabbath. This change is one of the most convincing arguments from a historical perspective that something astonishing must have occurred at the beginnings of Christianity. This event, the Resurrection, is the reason why Christians observe Sunday instead of the Sabbath (Saturday). Nevertheless, the deepest meaning of the Sabbath and the commandment to keep it holy is in no way abandoned by Christians but rather fulfilled.

Likewise the obligations of the third commandment—to remember and to rest—continue in the New Covenant, but now as a living remembrance, especially in the eucharistic liturgy, of God's supreme work of redemption and of making us a new creation in Christ, and now as a rest not only from work and servile labor but also as a rest which looks forward in hope to definitively "entering into God's rest" in eternal life (cf. Heb 4:1-11). This catechesis on the third commandment in light of the Resurrection hopefully helps us to see why there is a perpetual obligation of remembrance and rest on the Lord's Day.

by Father Andrew Heaslip, Diocesan Director of Religious Education, Diocesan Coordinator of Digital Media, Director of the TV Mass for the Homebound