

From the Pastor—May 2, 2021

CCD school year endings I was happy to take part in the end of our school year of religious education for our youth, at St. Joseph's on Monday and St. Mary's on Wednesday. In Giltner, we celebrated Holy Mass together and then had snacks and games outdoors. It is fun to watch how kids can come up with ways to entertain themselves! A couple of students and I intently and joyfully watched a spider climb up the outside wall of church. St. Mary's had Mass the week previous, and so Wednesday's last "class" was held as a picnic at Cole Park. The parents dropped off and picked up their children there. Several parents got together to cook hot dogs, and there was a wide array of chips and sweet treats. Of course, the park has play equipment which everyone really took to. In addition, footballs, baseballs, and soccer balls were whizzing around through the air. One student came up to me and said, "I don't know why they think you are weird!" This ever-precocious one, s/he was reporting to me what was being said about a priest seen among 100 picnicking children and adults in a city park—it's not something you see every day! *** I cannot express enough my appreciation for those who coordinated and taught the students in our parishes this year. It is worth noting that about half of the St. Mary's teachers were NOT current parents of the students. Please always know that we rely on the goodness of ALL parishioners of whatever age to be strong leaders in the faith and help impart their love of Jesus to the students. Be generous whenever God might call you to this wonderful work with our youth. And, next school year (2021-2022), we will begin Confirmation preparation in anticipation of the Bishop coming in the fall of 2022 (the 2022-2023) school year. Students who are currently finishing grades 3, 4, and 5 will be confirmed at that time.

My Memory Lane (1998-1999) As a run-up to my silver anniversary of ordination, I thought I would take a trip down memory lane with you. Last week's bulletin spoke of my two years at the Newman Center, after which I was appointed to be the assistant pastor at North American Martyrs in Lincoln. I kept my teaching assignment at Pius X High School, teaching the same grade of sophomores in religion classes. I came to know the parish as simply "Martyrs", without saying the North American part. Others fondly call the parish "NAM" for short. My pastor was Father Gary Gabel. This parish and its PK-8 grade school was a real joy to serve. It still had the freshness of being a brand-new parish, having been created by Bishop Bruskewitz in the early 1990's. Martyrs is located in the Highlands area of northwest Lincoln. Before I was assigned there, I could not have driven to it without directions (this was before Google and GPS and such). If you are familiar with Lincoln, North American Martyrs is about a mile straight north of the airport exit off of I-80. It is about the same distance from where Highway 34 coming in from Seward starts merging into I-180. The rectory at the time was a residential house; Father Gabel and I either had to walk the 7-8 blocks to get to church or drive up the hill. The parish had begun its days by having Mass in Fredstrom Elementary School. Then, the gymnasium of the school housed Mass, with a constant putting up and taking down of folding, metal chairs. The church would not be built until five years after I left the parish; it was a grand day when the church was dedicated by the Bishop! Martyrs Church has become known as one of the prettiest churches in Lincoln. I formed some really good relationships at Martyrs, which I value to this day. I also greatly enjoyed the unique patronage

of the eight proto-martyrs of North America, who were killed in upstate New York and southern Ontario, Canada, in the 1600's. They were Jesuit priests, from France, and their zeal to bring the Gospel to the Native Americans was so beautiful. Being the assistant priest, I was not required to be involved in administrative meetings and decisions. I really enjoyed marriage preps, baptism preps, and teaching RCIA. One short year was all I had at Martyrs; next week, we will continue down memory lane to Dwight and Bee.

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. 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. May is always dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Rosary Leaders We have run a note in the bulletin for many months about the need for Rosary leaders prior to Holy Mass. 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 prepare well for Mass. Is the Lord calling you to step forward?

Bishop-elect Golka News broke on Friday of the current pastor of the St. Mary Cathedral in Grand Island, Father Jim Golka, being named by Pope Francis to become Bishop of Colorado Springs. This is a great honor for Bishop-elect Golka and his family. Many of you reading this have stopped at the Cathedral for personal prayer or for Masses. Or, you have attended weddings and funerals there. And, Father Jim is a lifelong Grand Island-ite, so some of you have known him for many years. He has become a friend to me in my years here at Aurora, as we have worked pastorally together to serve people. He is a good confessor. The way someone is named a bishop has a several stages. Bishops of an area put forth names of priests in their dioceses who they think would be good candidates for the episcopacy. The Apostolic Nuncio in Washington D.C. is the Pope's representative in the country; he takes the list from the area bishops and exhaustively researches the candidates to determine their suitability. Once the nuncio is satisfied, he forwards the names to the Congregation for Bishops in Rome. The prefect of the Congregation then meets with the Pope, submits the names of those they have determined to be suitable candidates, and awaits the Holy Father's final decision. After this decision, the nuncio contacts the priest. In Father Golka's case, he had been in the Kansas City area when he received the phone call from the nuncio. He said he was shocked and humbled. Please pray for him as he departs the Grand Island Diocese and begins to serve the people of the Diocese of Colorado Springs.

Happy Easter Season! God Bless You!!!

Father Grell