

From the Pastor—May 9, 2021

CCD=Youth+Parents+Teachers 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. We will need generous, faithful, resilient teachers for these students at this important time of their lives.

New Rectory Bathroom Chad Garrett Construction of Aurora began re-modeling the St. Mary and St. Joseph Rectory bathroom on April 5. The job was completed this past Wednesday. For any of you who have had a contractor re-do parts of your home, you know it is a challenge to feel infringed upon by the extra noises and extra people around. But it is worth it in the end. While the work was being done, I migrated to the guest room part of the rectory. The guest quarters have a bathtub/shower combination. With the new walk-in shower that Garrett Construction installed, future priests in the rectory will have their choice of which to use. As I mentioned previously, funds donated from St. Mary and St. Joseph outside of regular envelope contributions will cover the expenses in full for this project. I appreciate the workmanship of our contractor. I am grateful to all of you for taking care of your rectory/pastor.

GPS Graduation I was happy to attend the graduation ceremonies at Giltner High School last Sunday. It was my first time inside of the school since before Covid hit. This in itself made it a memorable experience for me. Congratulations to the Hornet graduates!

My Memory Lane (1999-2005) 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 year as assistant pastor at North American Martyrs in Lincoln. In 1999, quite to my surprise, I was named a pastor. I clearly remember reading the letter of appointment from Bishop Bruskewitz. He assigned me to Assumption Church in Dwight, with a mission parish of St. Wenceslaus in Bee. I had never been in either of these towns! For you who, like me, may not know where these towns are, they are roughly in between Seward and David City, to the east of Nebraska Highway 15. I remember the two trustees, Norm and Edwin, meeting me as I moved in on the transfer day. I remember the Altar Society president being there to welcome me. It was all such a rush of new people, new surroundings, new duties. The Bishop also appointed me to teach on the faculty of Aquinas/St. Mary's School in David City. From Dwight, it was a 17-mile drive each day to teach at Aquinas. *** You might realize that, as an assistant pastor, I was not directly involved in the administration of the financial resources nor the decision-making of parish matters. That all changed upon being named a pastor at Dwight and Bee. I had to learn, and learn quickly, how to be the go-to guy! Thankfully, I was blessed with a veteran, long-time parish secretary named Sharon (she is still serving at secretary there). She helped me navigate the barrage of questions and concerns which I encountered. *** In this assignment, I had the unique situation

of serving with a senior priest-in-residence. He was Father Peter Gadiant. He lived in the rectory in Bee, while I lived in Dwight. Father Gadiant was able to offer daily Mass to the St. Wenceslaus people. He celebrated Masses on weekends and preached most of the Sundays. The interesting thing about Father Gadiant, now deceased, is that he was a priest from my childhood. In fact, he heard my first confession as a little second grader, which I still remember vividly. *** My teaching at Aquinas was difficult in my first year. I was assigned sophomore religion class, and the school was using block scheduling. This means that the class periods were 90 minutes long, instead of the traditional 50-minute periods. To keep the attention of teens for that period of time really tested me. The next year, I was offered 6th grade religion, which kept to the traditional teaching periods. This was much better, and I really grew to love teaching that age of students. I also taught a 4th-grade class once per week. *** If it sounds like I was busy, the constant activity caught up with me during my first year at Dwight and Bee. The day of the Easter Vigil, 2000, I started feeling crummy. I celebrated the Vigil Mass, but I had to leave partway through it to use the restroom. On Easter Sunday morning, I couldn't get out of bed. I was fortunate to have Father Gadiant to be my last-minute substitute. I was diagnosed with prostatitis. I really felt low, sicker than I can remember ever. The Bishop told me to go home to my parents' and get better. I remember Mom and Dad driving to Dwight to take me home to our family farm. I spent four weeks there convalescing. When I returned to the parish, I came down with shingles—ouch! *** The good times definitely outweighed the bad. I was happy to lead a project of providing a concrete slab for a parking lot beside the newly built parish hall in Dwight. We also celebrated Assumption's 100th anniversary as a parish while I was there. I was able to visit Mom and Dad fairly frequently; Dwight was 84 miles from our farmstead. Those days in Butler and Seward Counties were great; next week, you will journey with me down south to my assignment at Lawrence.

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?

Happy Easter Season! God Bless You!!!

Father Grell