

FROM FR. MARK SEIKER ... June 20, 2021

A few words of introduction: I grew up on a farm, a mile north of the little town of Elmwood, which is East of Lincoln. My parents (Vincent and Theresa Seiker) lived on the farm all their lives until they retired and moved to Lincoln in 2000. They are members of St. Peter Parish (45th & Old Cheney) in Lincoln.

I am the 2nd oldest of 5 children. My older brother Steve and his wife Roma have three children and live in Omaha. My sister, Susan and her husband Mike Foley (the Lieutenant Governor of Nebraska) have 6 adult children and live in Lincoln, in St. Peter Parish. My brother, Msgr. Dan, (was the Judicial Vicar [Priest in charge of the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal] working on Declarations of Nullity, & later Assistant Spiritual Director at St. Gregory the Great Seminary), and now he is the Chaplain for Wyoming Catholic College in Lander, WY. My youngest brother, Fr. Leo, is the Administrator of St. Joseph Parish in Friend. Both Msgr. Dan and Fr. Leo are Lincoln Diocesan priests.

I was ordained a Priest for the Lincoln Diocese in 1984, and I have served in parishes in Hastings, Nebraska City, Bellwood, McCook, Beatrice, Imperial, North Platte, and now in Auburn and Giltner. I thank you for the warm, friendly welcome that I have already received. May the Lord bless the work that each of us is called to do to build His Kingdom here in Auburn and Giltner. None of us can do everything, but each one can do the part that we are called by God to do. Working together and being obedient to God's will, we can shape a beautiful picture, because we will be letting the Lord work in and through us and it will truly be His picture ... His work!

One of my other duties is that about twenty-seven years ago, I was assigned by Bishop Bruskwitz to be the Diocesan Spiritual Advisor for the Cursillo Movement in the Diocese. I am also the Spiritual Advisor for the National Cursillo Movement. Thus, there are some meetings that I will need to attend and some retreat weekends that will take me away from the parishes for a few weekends and other days. I will keep you informed of those dates.

Before I knew that I was coming to St. Mary Parish and St. Joseph Parish, I had already made some plans.

In fact, on Tue., June 29, I will be going to Colorado for the Ordination & Installation of Bishop Elect Jim Golka (*who was the Pastor of St. Patrick Church, North Platte for nine of the years I was in North Platte*) as the Third Bishop of Colorado Springs, CO. At this time, my schedule for that week is a little uncertain. It is possible/probable that I will be gone from the parishes for most of the weekdays (*more in next week's bulletin*).

On Thu., July 8 – Sat., July 10, I will be at the Savior Pastoral Center in Kansas City, KS for a National meeting of Cursillo leaders. Fr. Nicholas Kipper (*a Lincoln Diocesan Priest*) will be here for Confessions & Masses July 10 - 11.

If you want to contact me at any time, you may call the Rectory "land line" 402-694-3427. This phone line will probably about 99% of the time be forwarded to my cell phone (*my "flip phone"*). When I am praying the Mass, hearing Confessions, or meeting with persons, my phone is on

vibrate and I give my attention to the persons in front of me. I encourage you to leave a message for me on my cell phone. When I return your phone call, I will most often be calling from my cell phone and you will notice that the call will show up on your phone as "private" or "restricted" or "caller id not known", or something like that (*because I have my cell phone number "blocked"*). It used to be that telemarketers used blocked numbers ... now they "steal" someone else's number and call you from that number. I want people to have a connection with the Lord and His Church and not with me. [*Yes, God has called me to be His instrument, one of His channels or grace, however; I want to direct people to Jesus.*] Over the past 15 years, I have found this a very helpful way to be very available to anyone who calls the Rectory phone ... wherever I happened to be ... in town, at my parents, etc. However, because the phone number you call is a "land line", **you can NOT text me!** You may also contact me by email frmseiker@gmail.com.

I look forward to getting to know each of you. Please introduce yourselves to me until I am able to call you by your first name.

I also want to share with you **some recent developments in my health condition.** Throughout my life, I have been "disgustingly healthy" (*a phrase one of my first pastors used, that I think pretty well describes most of my life*).

On Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2020, I saw Dr. Richard Wurtz at Holy Family Clinic in Lincoln and had a blood draw. Dr. Wurtz called me later in the day to tell me that the results of the blood draw were causing him concern. He said that my WBC (*white blood count*) was 170 (*normal range is 4-10*). He said that this might be indicating blood cancer. On Wednesday, Sept. 23, I met with Dr. Eric Avery at Nebraska Hematology Oncology (NHO) in Lincoln. His **preliminary Theory Diagnosis** was that I have CML (*Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia*) but that he wanted to do some tests to confirm that theory. A Bone Marrow Biopsy was done on Tuesday, Sept. 29.

On Tuesday, October 6, 2020, Dr. Eric Avery said that the results from the Bone Marrow Biopsy procedure (*done 09/29/20*) were reassuring. In technical language Dr. Avery said that there were **not a lot of "Blasts"** (*the most immature cells called myeloblasts*) which is good. Dr. Avery said the diagnosis of CML (*Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia*) is now confirmed. Dr. Avery said that there was a targeted medicine (*Imatinib Mesylate Tablets = 400 mg*) that I would take once a day. Dr. Avery said that 20 years ago CML was one of the worst Leukemias and that this Imatinib medicine has revolutionized CML, so that now it is one of the best Leukemias. Dr. Avery said that I am in the best risk category of CML. Dr. Avery scheduled weekly blood tests and a monthly visit with Dr. Avery. Since late December 2020, I have saw one of the Doctors at NHO in April, and all is looking good, and normal.

All in all, I think that my health is pretty good, that I am doing well, feeling good, and able to have a pretty normal schedule of activities.