

From the Pastor—June 13, 2021

My Jubilee! Wow, what a great celebration was thrown for me by St. Mary and St. Joseph Parishes! Thank you for the open house sponsored by the ladies of St. Joseph Altar Society, and the dinner sponsored by the ladies of St. Mary Altar Society. *** The open house did not require an RSVP, and so I was pleasantly surprised by whoever I saw walk through the doors. My mother was able to attend, and she became a part of the greeting line. My sister, brother, and nephew also attended. The longest distance travelled was by my cousins from Wichita and Eudora, Kansas. Some who came to the open house also remained for the dinner. The evening proceeded seamlessly from the open house into the dinner around 5:00 p.m. There was a head table set up near the two double doors leading into church. Mr. Ken Thiele of St. Mary's served as Master of Ceremonies and sat there with his wife, Lori. My family also was at the head table. Sitting at a reserved table were our Totus Tuus team members who served our parishes last week, as well as two brother priests from the York Deanery, Fathers John Sullivan of York and Harlan Waskowiak of Geneva. The dinner itself was very tasty! Little remembrances were spoken by Mr. Thiele, and I gave a short talk toward the end. A lot of pictures were taken by family and friends. I saw good friends from all of my former assignments. It was just a fun, fun time, and a great celebration of the priesthood. I am very grateful.

Our Procession I asked for help from the St. Mary Altar Society to hold a Eucharistic procession after the 8:15 a.m. Mass last Sunday, June 6. It was not presented beforehand for people to plan for—organized in the last few days—and so I announced to the congregation that they did not have to stay if they had pressing plans to attend to. We processed out of church with Jesus in the monstrance to three outdoor altars: in front of the rectory, in front of the north face of the hall, and at the Mary Garden at the pre-2014 entrance to the church. Each outdoor altar was decorated with an altar cloth and flowers and candles. A kneeler was placed at each altar. I read a passage from the Gospels and then gave Benediction with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. I prayed for all of you in a special way! I really appreciate it that this procession was able to be arranged and happen; it is something that is good to be done every year at Corpus Christi, if not more often.

Totus Tuus The team for Totus Tuus was composed of seminarian, Ranil Weerackoon, and students Daniel Reiter, Cloelia Braunsroth, and Hannah Hames. I want to give a short bio of these four youth who served our St. Mary and St. Joseph youth:

Ranil – He grew up a half hour south of Los Angeles in the metro area. When he came to study at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, he discerned a vocation to the priesthood and is a seminarian for the Lincoln Diocese at Mount St. Mary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, entering Theology 2 this fall.

Daniel – The students affectionately nicknamed him “Ghost Rider.” He is a graduate of Aquinas High School in David City and is a student at UN-K. He studied in the St. Gregory Seminary at Seward for a couple of years.

Cloelia – I like her name! But I had a hard time learning how to pronounce it. She is a graduate of Bishop Neumann High School in Wahoo and is currently a student at UN-L. Her mom's brother is a priest and her dad's sister is a nun!

Hannah – She is a student at UN-L and graduated from Pius X High School. She was born in Iowa but went to grade school mostly at St. Joseph School in Lincoln

Schedule – We had Mass each day with the students, about 45 total youth in grades 1-8. The Totus Tuus team taught the youth to worship Jesus well at Mass, and our students participated in serving and reading and offertory gifts. The high school youth, about eight students total, met in the evenings from 8:00 – 10:00, with one of the high school families hosting us for the last night's social. A few high schoolers helped with the grade school sessions during the day—thank you!

Curriculum – The students in grades 1-8 learned about the 10 commandments. Most all of these youth should know each of the commandments if you ask them to name them!

Sights and sounds – The Totus Team was treated to great meals from parishioners. A kickball game broke out at one parishioner's home! A picnic at Streeter Park was also enjoyed, as well as taste-testing the gelato at JoJo's. In addition, many silly and fun songs were learned, and sung loudly, by the students. The customary and festive water fight broke out on Friday with lots of water thrown about on each other and an ice cream sundae made over the head and shoulders of TT teammate Dan!

T-shirts – I decided, as our parish has done in the past, to purchase via funds of St. Mary's and St. Joseph's a Totus Tuus t-shirt for each participant. I think these t-shirts are such a good witness to the fun and love which describes a life well-lived in Jesus Christ. Hopefully, when people see our youth with their t-shirts, it will provoke good conversations about Jesus.

VBS? – Other congregations hold wonderful Vacation Bible Schools for their youth, and I am sure that Jesus is much loved by the students within these summer programs. But I have a hard time seeing a VBS experience as wonderful as what Totus Tuus provides to our youth in the Aurora and Giltner parishes. Totus Tuus is not just a Lincoln Diocese event; many other dioceses also hold this summer camp for kids, and some of those dioceses even train with our Diocese because we run a solid program via Jeff Schinstock at our Youth Ministry Office in Lincoln.

My Retreat From May 31 – June 3, I was away on retreat with about 50 other priests of our diocese. It was a wonderful time of prayer and down time. We ate together, prayed together, socialized together. Our retreat master was Bishop Emeritus William Dendinger of Grand Island. He was a last-minute substitute for the original retreat master, a priest of Detroit, who passed away suddenly at age 67 on Pentecost Sunday. Bishop Dendinger, who was ordained a priest in the Omaha Archdiocese, shared lots of stories from his travels around the world as a military chaplain. His basic theme was “Conversion,” and he shared seven different conversion passages from the Old and New Testaments. Thank you for your prayers while I was on retreat.

Until We Meet Again...

Father Grell