

From the Pastor—March 3, 2019

Mass Times Change March 10th Our parishes will have a new schedule beginning Sunday, March 10th. On that day, and going forward, the St. Mary's Mass will be at 8:15 a.m., followed by the St. Joseph's Mass at 10:45 a.m. I am praying for us all to adjust well to this change. The Saturday evening Mass will remain at 5:00 p.m. at St. Mary's.

What a Blizzard! The folklore of our State of Nebraska gives many of us a familiarity with the Blizzard of 1888. I don't know details about it except that it sprang up out of nowhere; school children were in their one-room schoolhouses, and many a teacher risked life and limb to get all the children home safely. A true blizzard doesn't seem like it happens as much as it used to. But I would classify our weather last Saturday as a blizzard, even though the National Weather Service maintained Hamilton County just outside of the actual Blizzard Warning. It was just crazy to watch the snow come down! I hope all of you stayed safe as you possibly could. My heart and prayers go out especially to those who are caring for cattle, sheep, and other livestock. If you are calving or lambing, I understand if you look sleepy at Mass because of keeping night watch for the newborns. My heart and prayers also go out to many, who, like my parents, decide this time of year to mostly stay put inside their homes. You probably can't wait for Spring. And even stories of your grandchildren or other kids who are sledding on snow days while drinking hot cocoa aren't enough to change your "Bah Humbug" to all things Winter. We will get through this prolific winter weather, together. Soon, we will wonder why it's so hot out!

It's a great day to be a Catholic! I think Ash Wednesday, more than most any other day, is a great day to be a Catholic. We show our faith in such a unique way that day by wearing our ashes. The ashes give us great opportunity to tell people about Jesus, because we know that they notice the ashes, even if they don't ask us about them. Look for opportunities to explain the words of the ash-giving: "Remember, you are dust and unto dust you shall return"; or the other option is "Repent, and believe in the Gospel." More people than you might realize who are your co-workers or neighbors do not know who Jesus Christ is. We should want them to know and be willing to say how the Lord has died and risen so that our mortal bodies do not remain in ashes into infinity. Our bodies will rise up, either to heavenly glory or to eternity in Hell. Take good care of your soul on Ash Wednesday, not so much as being like a policy of Fire Insurance for Hell Prevention, but as a way to show that you know life is short and that eternal life with God is GLORIOUS!

Father Kubat's Mother About the same time I found out that Father Brad Zitek had died, another in our priest-family network passed away: the mother of Father Christopher Kubat. Her name was Mary Barbara, but she went by Barbara. I came to know Barbara as Chris was entering seminary. You may know his storied history, of having completed medical school and worked in a Urology Practice as an MD for seven years. I think that all along, his mother and father, Lou, still saw a priestly vocation in him. We as seminarians at the time teased him about how many hearts he was breaking by choosing the seminary; handsome, single doctors are probably pretty sought after! And even though he was their only son (a tiny one died in infancy), with three sisters, his parents were pleased as punch when he was ordained. So proud were they, and are they still. "Kubat" is a common name around Omaha. Father Chris' dad was a dentist. Father Chris graduated from the

former Ryan High School, for those of you who remember it. You might know that a priest usually presides at the funeral Masses of his parents (if they pre-decease him). I imagine that Father Chris will reveal to us in his column in the Southern Nebraska Register what that experience was like. The funeral Mass of Christian burial was held this past Tuesday at St. Mary's, 36th and Q Streets, in Omaha. Pray for Father Chris and his sisters, Mary Baker (Richard), Barbara Tranisi (Nick), and Eileen Newton (Brian), and all the grandchildren who mourn the loss of Barbara.

Father Brad's Funeral It was a treacherous day last Monday to attend Father Zitek's funeral at St. Joseph Church, Lincoln. The streets were snow packed and difficult to navigate. Snow was piled high, sometimes at intersections, making traffic take extra caution. I was almost late, and had to huff, puff, half-run from my car to the church, where I hurriedly prayed with Father Brad's body and then put on my vestments for Holy Mass. Both Bishop Conley and Bishop Emeritus Bruskewitz were there, along with Brad's family, about 80 priests, and many faithful laity. It was a somber day, yet Father Brad would have us pray for him and for his family. Thank you for your kindness toward me at the loss of my brother priest.

March Schedule Comments I have changed up our parishes' Lenten schedule compared to last year. One staple of Lent is the Stations of the Cross. This devotion will be held every Tuesday, alternating between St. Mary's and St. Joseph's. Stations will be held every Wednesday at St. Mary's, except maybe not during Holy Week. I have scheduled a couple of Sunday "Faith of our Father" events, denoting me as your spiritual father to share with you elements of faith that I can't fit into any one homily or RCIA class. I am also hoping during Lent to meet with many of our families whose children are preparing for First Penance, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation.

The Shroud of Turin Jim Bertrand will be here to speak to our parishes about the Holy Shroud of Turin next month. Mr. Bertrand will speak at St. Mary's after the 8:15 Mass at Coffee and Rolls on March 10th. He will speak at St. Joseph's after Stations of the Cross on March 19th. His talk will be around 50 minutes, with 10 minutes allowed for Q & A. Jim is the Director of Field Operations for The American Confraternity of the Holy Shroud (ACHS). Plan now to make time for learning about the Holy Shroud. To learn more, go to www.shroudofturin.com.

What should I/my family do for Lent? Remember, the basic idea of Lent is to focus our practices in the areas of fasting, giving alms, and prayer. An idea for a way to give alms is that we might observe "Mercy Fridays" as Pope Francis often does. He visits people on that day and spends time with them...this is a beautiful thing to consider for all of us.

Joy! I will say more later about our parishes' status with the Joy of the Gospel Capital Campaign.

God Bless You!

Father Grell