

# A Word From Fr. Tom Niehaus

July 21, 2019



## Martha and Mary

“The Lord said to her in reply, ‘Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her (Luke 10:40-42).’” The majestic St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Sleepy Eye, MN is truly one of the gems of rural Minnesota. As one drives toward Sleepy Eye on US Highway 14 from the East or West, a glimpse of the towering spires leads the thirsty soul to find refreshment and spiritual satisfaction in this stunning house of God. The German immigrants who built this cathedral-style church were truly committed to building the grandest church in all of Brown County. As one gazes upon the hand crafted wood work, ornate statues, and stunning stained glass windows one gets a sense of the time, effort and prayer that has gone into this amazing place of peace and pilgrimage. As one exits the church proper and makes their way to the chapel of Eucharistic Adoration on the north side of the church they will note the symmetry of the wood work in the little chapel that matches the main church as well as a curious stained glass window above the altar there. It is a stained glass window with the scene of this week’s Gospel passage about Martha and Mary with the words printed around the edge, “She hath chosen the better part.” As one gazes upon the window they will see Martha holding at iten in service and being busy with serving turning her head away from the Lord Jesus who is the central theme of the ornate window, while Mary can be seen resting by Jesus in a prayerful posture. Besides drumming up interest among potential pilgrims for visiting this beautiful church and chapel in Sleepy Eye, MN where my mother attends Holy Mass, I point out the image of the stained glass window to give context to the encounter that Jesus is having with Martha and Mary. Martha is a representative of all those faithful souls in our parishes and communities who are ready to serve others, but not necessarily from a place of prayer or by being motivated by Jesus. Mary is a representative of all those faithful souls in our parishes and communities who are ready to enter into prayer and reflection upon our Lord and the mysteries of faith and who allow that prayer to animate the service they do out of a love for God and others in need. The bottom line is that all of us need to know, love and serve the Lord. If we are only serving the Lord from a place of feeling good, how much more will our service be blessed if it is flowing from an active life of prayer where we grow in our love of Jesus Christ and His people? As a follower of Jesus Christ, do you currently identify more with Martha or Mary? How might this change with increased prayer and devotion in your life?

## Leadership & Meetings

It has been a great joy to meet the various members of Most Holy Redeemer, St. Canice and St. Patrick. I have been blessed to celebrate at least one weekend Mass at each place. There have been opportunities to have meals at the homes of some of our families and to visit some of the sick and the elder members of our communities. In the coming days and weeks I will be taking time to meet with leadership from each of the parishes. These meetings with trustees, finance council, parish council, school board and cemetery leadership will help me to get a sense of who the go-to people are in each of the communities. In each of the past assignments I have relied heavily on my leadership to assist in the blessed task of sharing the Gospel with everyone in our area especially those on the margins of our communities. As these first meetings take place, please be patient with me, because we have different parish, school and cemetery structures in our area it is helpful for me to meet on an every other month basis with leadership connected with St. Patrick in Shieldsville in July, September, November, January, March, and May and with leadership connected with Most Holy Redeemer of Montgomery and St. Canice of Kilkenny in August, October, December, February, April and June. Most Holy Redeemer School has regular school board meetings during the year and operates on their own timetable for these gatherings. I am happy to serve as a priest in a parish setting and having an organized structure for meetings helps me to stay on task and hopefully will allow leadership to stay on task as well with our combined responsibility of serving the people of God in our area with love and bringing a high level of transparency and care to the dealings we are entrusted with in the name of Jesus Christ.

God bless you!

Fr. Tom Niehaus