

SAINT PETER'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

MAY 24, 2020



104 WEST FIRST STREET • MANSFIELD, OHIO 44902
419.524.2572 | MANSFIELDSTPETERS.ORG

Mass Schedule:

There will be no Masses offered at this time. Mass will be available on WMFD TV on Sunday at 10:00 A.M. and on the St. Peter's YouTube channel, website and Facebook page.

Spanish Mass:

Resurrection Parish, Lexington

All Masses are cancelled until further notice.

Parish Office Hours:

All offices are closed until at least June 1, 2020

Pastoral Care Contacts:

Ms. Kristi Reindl 419.524.2572
*Hospital & Follow-up
Nursing Homes/Assisted Living &
Prayer Pipeline*
Deacon John Reef 419.529.3694
Shut-ins/Homebound

Sacrament of Baptism:

Please contact the Parish Center to begin plans for the baptism of your baby or child.

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Saturday: 3:00 - 4:30 P.M.
Other times by appointment.

Sacrament of Marriage:

Arrangements should always be made at the **Parish Center office at least eight months** in advance of the ceremony. A wedding date is confirmed after the initial meeting with a priest.

Bulletin Deadline:

Friday, 12:00 noon. All requests must be submitted in writing or email and must receive prior approval.

Parish Administrative Assistant:

Ms. Kristi Reindl 419.524.2572 ext.2122

Pastoral Staff:

Fr. Gregory R. Hite, *Pastor*
Fr. Austin Ammanniti, *Parochial Vicar*
Mr. Bill Johnson,
Director of Music & Liturgy
Ms. Lynne Lukach, *Pastoral Associate*
Mrs. Elizabeth Wurm, *Director of
Religious Ed. & Youth Minister*

Deacon:

Mr. John Reef

St. Peter's School:

Mr. Jonathan Cuttitta
High School, Jr. High School
Mrs. Ashley Rastorfer
Elementary School and Montessori

Parish Business Manager:

Mr. Evan Mumea

Director of Development:

Mr. Jason Crundwell

A PARISH OF THE SAINT JUAN DIEGO DEANERY, DIOCESE OF TOLEDO

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR ON THE REOPENING OF CHURCH FOR PUBLIC MASSES

May 20, 2020

"The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith.

We have an anchor: By His cross we have been saved.

We have a rudder: By His cross we have been redeemed.

We have a hope: By His cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from His redeeming love."

[Excerpted from Pope Francis' March 27 reflection]

Dear Friend(s) in Christ,

These past three months have been a spiritual, emotional, and physical challenge for all of us. The response of this pandemic has resulted in fear, anxiety, unemployment, and over-reaching concern for all – including our family, friends, and neighbors.

Recently, the May 16th edition of *Mansfield News Journal* highlighted the most recent communication from our diocese. As our Catholic diocese announced on May 8, 2020, in a letter to clergy and parishes, we are preparing for a "Gradual Restoration of Public Masses and Liturgies." A "soft opening" for public parish Masses is approved to begin with weekday Mass **on Monday, May 25th**. **For our parish, we will celebrate Memorial Day Mass at 9 am in the church**, observing the following restrictions. The gradual restoration of publically celebrated Masses and all regularly scheduled liturgies begins on **Saturday, May 30, 2020 with the Vigil Mass of Pentecost Sunday (5 pm at St. Peter's)**. Per directives from our diocese, the continuance of limited gatherings are *subject to change* at any moment. Nevertheless, the following guidelines will remain in effect at least **until July 1, 2020**, unless pastors are notified of any amendment, revocation, or continuance.

DISPENSATION FROM THE OBLIGATION TO ATTEND SUNDAY MASS

The faithful of the Diocese of Toledo continue to be *dispensed from their Sunday Mass obligation* until further notice. We strongly encourage those who are elderly, sick, those with pre-existing conditions to **refrain from returning** to public liturgies (including weekend Mass) until such time as you feel confident to do so. Stay home, be safe, and watch the 10 am Sunday Mass on WMFD.

PROPER SOCIAL DISTANCING

As your Pastor, it is my responsibility to make every effort to ensure that appropriate social distancing before, during, and after liturgical celebrations is maintained in order to create a safe environment for all involved. In this context, I highlight the following practices to be followed:

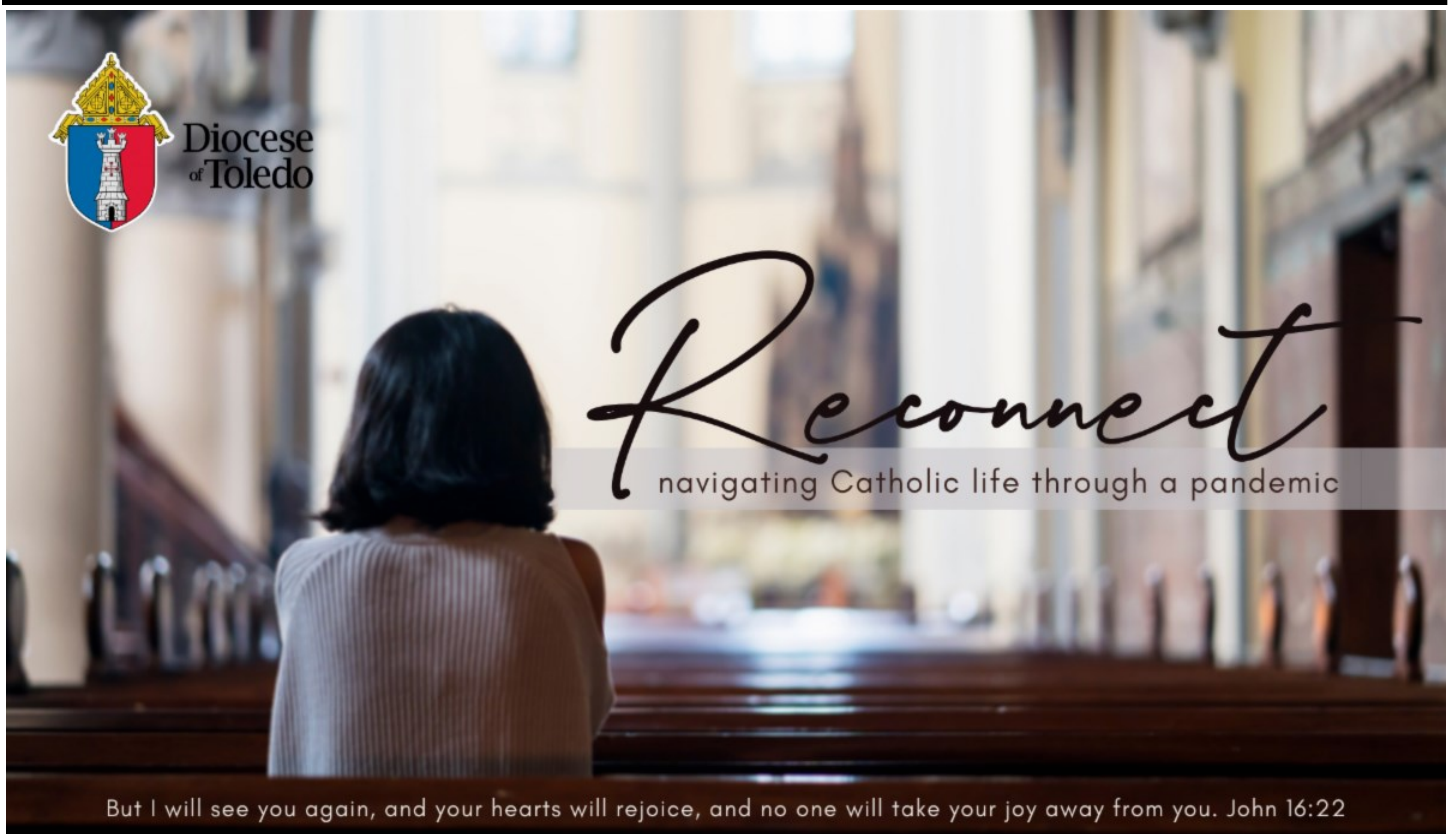
- Other than family household members who live together, **worshippers should be seated six feet (6 ft.) apart in all directions**. We intend to observe the mandate by the State of Ohio and the Conference of Catholic Bishops that the capacity is not to exceed 50% of fire code regulations. We plan to make accommodations for an *overflow* congregation in the event the church reaches capacity. For now, overflow seating will be in the **basement of the church, with video feed of the Mass**. Please be patient with us.

- Please – we **strongly encourage you to wear a facial covering, or mask. Please consider bringing your own hand sanitizer.**
- Stations for the distribution of Holy Communion will be limited. The priests and deacon who are present will distribute in **the center aisle only.**
- Our bishop's directive is that any/all liturgical ministers are to be limited. Those who assist will maintain social distancing and wear a mask. Please observe the tape markings on the floor in the center aisle, as well as pews marked off, to secure six feet distancing. Also, **please follow the directions of the ushers.**
- There will be no entrance or exit processions to begin or end Mass.
- During this time, the "Offertory Procession," including the usual time for the "Collection" is suspended. **Please bring your sacrificial offering with you to Holy Communion and place it in the basket at the Communion rail. Envelopes and donations to our parish *may also be sent in the mail or offered "on line."***
- The Sign of Peace continues to be **suspended** at this time.
- Please **refrain from holding hands during The Lord's Prayer, *a gesture that is not prescribed in the Roman Missal.***
- There will be NO offering of the Precious Blood from the chalice.
- **The reception of Holy Communion on the hand is strongly encouraged.** Out of charity, sacrifice, and the health of your neighbor and your parish clergy, you are encouraged to receive on the hand. Clergy are not permitted to wear gloves for the distribution of Holy Communion.
- Understanding that a certain sense of apprehensiveness and anxiety may exist, you may *refrain from receiving* Holy Communion if you desire. Those who choose not to receive are encouraged to make a "Spiritual Communion."
- Do not expect Holy Water in the fonts during this time. A sign of the cross and genuflection to the reserved Blessed Sacrament is appropriate.
- We will do our best to keep common places in church (restrooms, door openings, handles, etc.) sanitized, but we do ask that – ***given the limited hand sanitizer currently available – you try to bring your own hand sanitizer with you to church.*** Single bathrooms at the bottom of the stairs, each side, as well as the "children's" room" will be available.
- Hymnals and missalettes will be removed. We intend to utilize our TV monitors for congregational participation in singing. Please expect NO paper bulletins at this time.

As we near the conclusion of the Easter Season with the celebration of the Solemnity of Pentecost, our minds and hearts turn toward the risen and ascended Lord who sent the Holy Spirit upon his disciples. His promise to be with us always gives us hope and strength to persevere during these unsettling times. May the Holy Spirit empower us to face courageously whatever may come and cause us to rejoice in our blessings. Invoking the intercession of Mary, Health of the Sick and Mother of the Church, I remain,

Sincerely yours in the Risen Lord,

Very Rev. Gregory R. Hite, V.F., Pastor



Introducing the Reconnect Campaign & Website

We are launching a campaign called *Reconnect* to assist parishes and the faithful as we continue to navigate Catholic life during COVID-19 and through the next phases of re-opening. One part of the campaign is a website with resources for parishes and the public. ReconnectToledo.org has resources to help the faithful, including spiritual resources and good news stories. Another portion of the website is resources for parishes. These will continue to be populated with information in the upcoming week.

If you have any questions about the Reconnect campaign, website, or general social media/Communications questions, please contact alust@toledodiocese.org.

Holy Spirit Novena & Red Ribbon Campaign

As we prepare for the return to public Masses on Pentecost, you're invited to take part in two initiatives from Friday, May 22 - Saturday, May 30, 2020.



Be a part of the Holy Spirit Novena

What is a novena?

The word 'novena' comes from the Latin word 'novem', which means 'nine'. Fittingly, a novena is nine days of prayer. Novenas are an ancient tradition that goes back to the days of the Apostles. Jesus told His disciples to pray together after His ascension into heaven, so they went to an upper room along with the Blessed Virgin Mary, (Acts 1:14) and joined constantly in prayer for nine days. These nine days of constant prayer by the Apostles at the direction of Jesus led up to Pentecost. This is when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples as "tongues of fire" (Acts 2:1-4). This pattern of 9 days of prayer is the basis the novenas we pray today.

As we prepare for the return to public Masses on Pentecost, we are praying the Holy Spirit novena together as a way to renew our love for and confidence in the Holy Spirit.

How can I participate?

Bishop Thomas created a video for each day. Click *Pray* to find all videos. Additionally, the videos will be posted on Facebook each day.

Be a part of the Red Ribbon Campaign

What is the Red Ribbon Campaign?



As we look forward with joy to the reopening of public Masses, the red ribbons are a visible sign of our anticipation, excitement, and unity. The goal is for Northwest Ohio to be covered in red ribbons! The color red was chosen because Masses reopen of Pentecost, and red symbolizes the fire of the Holy Spirit!

How can I participate?

Simply tie a red ribbon on your front door, mailbox, a tree in your yard, etc. on May 22, the first day of the novena.

POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II***The Ascension of the Lord Explained******Wednesday 24 May 2000***

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. The mystery of Christ's Passover involves the history of humanity, but at the same time it transcends it. Thought itself and human language can in some way grasp and communicate this mystery, but do not exhaust it. For this reason, the New Testament, although speaking of "resurrection", as attested by the ancient Creed which Paul himself received and passes on in his First Letter to the Corinthians (cf. 15:3-5), also uses another expression to explain the meaning of Easter. Especially in John and Paul it is presented as the *exaltation* or *glorification* of the Crucified One. Thus, for the fourth Evangelist, the Cross of Christ is already the royal throne which stands on earth but penetrates the heavens. Christ is seated on it as the Saviour and Lord of history.

Jesus, in fact, exclaims in the Gospel of John: "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (12:32; cf. 3:14; 8:28). In the hymn inserted in the Letter to the Philippians, Paul, after describing the profound humiliation of the Son of God in his death on a cross, celebrates Easter in this way: "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (*Phil* 2:9-11).

2. Christ's Ascension into heaven, recounted by Luke as the seal to his Gospel and the beginning of his second work, the Acts of the Apostles, should be understood in this same light. It is Jesus' final appearance which "ends with the irreversible entry of his humanity into divine glory, symbolized by the cloud and by heaven" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 659). Heaven is the sign of divine transcendence *par excellence*. It is the cosmic realm that lies above the earthly horizon within which human existence unfolds.

After walking the paths of history and entering even the darkness of death, the limits of our finitude and the wages of sin (cf. *Rom* 6:23), Christ returns to the glory which he shares from eternity (cf. *Jn* 17:5) with the Father and the Holy Spirit. And he takes redeemed humanity with him. In fact, the Letter to the Ephesians says that "God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, ... made us alive together with Christ ... and made us sit with him in the heavenly places" (*Eph* 2:4-6). This applies first of all to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, whose Assumption is the first-fruits of our ascension into glory.

3. We pause before the glorious Christ of the Ascension to contemplate the presence of the whole Trinity. We know that Christian art, in the so-called *Trinitas in cruce*, has often depicted the crucified Christ with the Father leaning over him as if in an embrace, while the dove of the Holy Spirit hovers between them (for example, Masaccio in the Church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence). In this way the Cross is a unifying symbol that joins humanity and divinity, death and life, suffering and glory.

In a similar way we can glimpse the presence of the three divine Persons in the Ascension scene. Luke, on the last page of his Gospel, before presenting the Risen One who, as the priest of the New Covenant, blesses his disciples and is lifted up from the earth to be taken into heavenly glory (cf. *Lk* 24:50-52), recalls his farewell discourse to the Apostles. In it we see above all the saving plan of the *Father*, who in the Scriptures had foretold the Death and Resurrection of the *Son*, the source of forgiveness and liberation (cf. *Lk* 24:45-47).

4. But in those same words of the Risen One we also glimpse the *Holy Spirit*, whose presence will be the source of strength and apostolic witness: "I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high" (*Lk* 24:49). If in John's Gospel the Paraclete is promised by Christ, for Luke the gift of the Spirit is also part of a promise made by the Father himself.

The whole Trinity is therefore present at the moment when the time of the Church begins. This is what Luke emphasizes in the second account of Christ's Ascension, in the Acts of the Apostles. Jesus, in fact, exhorts his disciples "to wait for the promise of the *Father*", that is, to "be baptized with the *Holy Spirit*", at Pentecost which is now imminent (cf. *Acts* 1:4-5).

5. The Ascension, then, is a Trinitarian epiphany which indicates the goal to which personal and universal history is hastening. Even if our mortal body dissolves into the dust of the earth, our whole redeemed self is directed on high to God, following Christ as our guide.

Sustained by this joyful certainty, we turn to the mystery of God the Father, the Son and the Spirit, which is revealed in the glorious Cross of the risen Christ, with the adoring prayer of Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity: "O my God, Trinity whom I adore, help me to forget myself entirely that I may be established in you as still and peaceful as if my soul were already in eternity.... Give peace to my soul; make it your heaven, your beloved dwelling and your resting place.... O my Three, my All, my Beatitude, infinite Solitude, Immensity in which I lose myself, I surrender myself to you ..., until I depart to contemplate in your light the abyss of your greatness" (*Prayer to the Blessed Trinity*, 21 November 1904).



Homily on the Ascension of the Lord

St. Augustine of Hippo

(354 AD to 430 AD)

Today our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven; let our hearts ascend with him. Listen to the words of the Apostle: *If you have risen with Christ, set your hearts on the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God; seek the things that are above, not the things that are on earth.* For just as he remained with us even after his ascension, so we too are already in heaven with him, even though what is promised us has not yet been fulfilled in our bodies.

Christ is now exalted above the heavens, but he still suffers on earth all the pain that we, the members of his body, have to bear. He showed this when he cried out from above: *Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?* and when he said: *I was hungry and you gave me food.*

Why do we on earth not strive to find rest with him in heaven even now, through the faith, hope and love that unites us to him? While in heaven he is also with us; and we while on earth are with him. He is here with us by his divinity, his power and his love. We cannot be in heaven, as he is on earth, by divinity, but in him, we can be there by love.

He did not leave heaven when he came down to us; nor did he withdraw from us when he went up again into heaven. The fact that he was in heaven even while he was on earth is borne out by his own statement: *No one has ever ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven.*

These words are explained by our oneness with Christ, for he is our head and we are his body. No one ascended into heaven except Christ because we also are Christ: he is the Son of Man by his union with us, and we by our union with him are the sons of God. So the Apostle says: *Just as the human body, which has many members, is a unity, because all the different members make one body, so is it also with Christ.* He too has many members, but one body.

Out of compassion for us he descended from heaven, and although he ascended alone, we also ascend, because we are in him by grace. Thus, no one but Christ descended and no one but Christ ascended; not because there is no distinction between the head and the body, but because the body as a unity cannot be separated from the head.



MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, May 25

9:00 am Agnes Contra Brucato (Anniversary)

Tuesday, May 26

7:00 am Parish

Wednesday, May 27

7:00 am Parish

Thursday, May 28

7:00 am Parish

Friday, May 29

5:30 pm Parish

Saturday, May 30

5:00 pm Margaret and Frank Jerger

Sunday, May 31

7:30 am Leroy Steiner

9:30 am Madeline Taddeo

11:30 am Parish

MEMORIAL DAY MASS

We will be having Mass on Monday, May 25 at 9:00 AM as a “soft reopening” of Mass to the public. Please note that we will be observing all social distancing guidelines prescribed by Bishop Thomas and Ohio Governor DeWine. We ask that you please only sit in the open pews; at least six feet away from each other, unless it is a family. We request that you wear a face mask or covering and please bring personal hand sanitizer. Thank you!

MASS ON THE 4TH OF JULY

With the 4th of July falling on a Saturday this year, we will not be having Mass at 9:00 AM, as we usually do on a holiday. Mass on July 4 will be at 5:00 PM, per our regular Mass schedule.



PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK OF OUR PARISH

Bill Ruhl, Jeannie Burkhalter, Aaron Blank, Cindy Lassen, Dina Riley, Eliana Nelson, MaKaya Butler, Sharon Valdry, Maria Loschinkohl, John Ziegler, Marlene Ziegler, Kim Rucker, Dorothy Trinter, Marti Selby, JoAnn Marbaugh, Baby Greyden Jack, Gwen Yockey, Mary Ann and Mel Switzer, Louise Steggall, Tammy Dudley, Keith Combs, Mady Ziegler, Elaine Johnson, Cindy Jasnek Cartier, Jeannine Klotz, Marilyn B. Williamson, Tom Powell, Chief Master Sergeant Joseph Basting, Peggy Basting Taylor, Kathy Carcione, Carol Pittenger, Charlie Henrich, Jill McMillen, Gary Caldwell, Jeffrey Davis, Willie "Frank" Williams, Catherine R. Liston, Pius Schell, Krista Marshall, Maggie Caldwell, Michael Davis, Michael Krempel, Marilyn Miller, Annette Togliatti, Rose Saul, Charlene Arthur, Alan Gallaway, Marty Moritz, Logan Page, Maxine Shannon, Gracie Shannon, Pam Schopieray.

Names will only be listed for 4 weeks. If you wish to have additional time, contact the Parish Center at 419.524.2572.

IN GOD'S ARMS...

ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO THEM, O LORD.

FOR ALL OF THE CURRENT IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ST. PETERS PARISH OPERATIONS DURING THESE TROUBLED TIMES, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:

WWW.MANSFIELDSTPETERS.ORG

THERE YOU WILL ALSO FIND DEVOTIONAL MATERIALS FOR USE AT HOME FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

ADULT FAITH ENRICHMENT

ALL ADULT FAITH CLASSES ARE ON HOLD UNTIL "NORMAL" PARISH CENTER HOURS AND OPERATIONS RESUME.



RECYCLING—NEXT DATE: JUNE 12, 2020

FOOD COLLECTION: June 13 & 14

PRISON MINISTRY CORNER

All Catholic services and programming at ManCI and RiCI are suspended for now. Please keep our brothers in prayer. Fortunately, many of them are able to watch Mass on WMFD, just as we are. They expressed their gratitude and greatly enjoyed being able to see the interior of our beautiful church.

GOOD STEWARDS

Loving Father, you alone are the source of every good gift. We praise you for all your gifts to us, and we thank you for your generosity. Everything we have, and all that we are, comes from you. Help us to be grateful and responsible.

You have called us to follow your son, Jesus, without counting the cost. Send us your Holy Spirit to give us courage and wisdom to be faithful disciples.

We commit ourselves to being good stewards. Help us to be grateful, accountable, generous, and willing to give back with increase. Help us to make stewardship a way of life.

We make this prayer through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

AMEN

PARISH CENTER OFFICE HOURS

Regular Parish office hours will be resuming starting June 1 from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Monday through Friday. We respectfully request that all business that can be done by phone continue in that manner, and ask, as well, that all visitors to our parish offices demonstrate social distancing guidelines.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Vacation Bible School has been cancelled for this year. We do look forward to seeing you next summer! Thank you for all who donated to VBS... those donations, barring the perishable food items that might expire, will be kept until next year's event. We look forward to seeing you soon!

SUNDAY OFFERING

*Year to Date
April 30, 2020*

Sunday and Holy Day Collections

Sunday Collection & Holy Day Collection:	\$703,761
Total Budgeted Sunday Collection To Date:	\$709,868

Sunday Collection Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$6,107)
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School Collection

Total School Collection To Date:	\$119,216
Total Budgeted School Collection To Date:	\$120,000

School Collection Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$784)
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TV MASS SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

You may know that we are broadcasting our Sunday Mass on WMFD TV in Mansfield, as well as on our Facebook, YouTube and Parish Web pages. While there is no cost associated with the internet transmissions, the cost of broadcasting on television is \$135.00 per half hour.

Many parishioners and area businesses have stepped up to underwrite the cost of these broadcasts. In these uncertain days that need may continue for quite some time to come.

If you or your business would like to underwrite a TV Mass, please contact Jason Crundwell or Bill Johnson at the Parish Center at 419.524.2572 ext. 2125 or ext. 2113 for more information.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO SUPPORT THE MINISTRIES OF ST. PETER'S PARISH BY MAILING IN YOUR OFFERING ENVELOPES OR VISITING THE WEBSITE, WWW.MANSFIELDSTPETERS.ORG, TO LEARN ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ELECTRONIC GIVING. WE GREATLY APPRECIATE YOUR GENEROSITY AND SUPPORT DURING THESE DIFFICULT DAYS!

SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL - ST. PETER'S CONFERENCE

Our Conference members pray this finds you safe and well during these challenging times. We are committed with our ongoing mission in serving individuals and families during this pandemic. We continue to receive calls from our community of those in need and we invite you to pray for our Conference that we may assist our brothers and sisters, to offer some relief in financial emergencies, as well as offer comfort and hope through our love through HIM. We anticipate having a significant increase in requests for help in the upcoming months and our Conference members are prayerfully working to contemplate how we can adapt to meet this demand. We invite you to consider, if able, to support our Conference with a financial donation to assist in our mission. If you receive Parish Envelopes, donations can be made on the green bordered "My Special Gift" envelope with delegating donation to St Vincent de Paul and/or mailed to our Conference to St. Peter's Parish. We are a 501(c)3 recognized charitable organization. Thank you so very much for your ongoing support of our ministry which was established in this Parish in 1932 and remains committed in our vision to serve our fellow brothers and sisters.

POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER TO OUR LADY, HEALTH OF THE SICK

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.

At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith.

You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need.

We are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee, joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father's will and to do what Jesus tells us:

He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.

Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS NEWS



The Knights of Columbus Council 687 would like to welcome its newest members Chad Cullen and Kelly Manley. They took advantage of becoming Third Degree members in the new on-line exemplification ceremony, joining over 2,000 other new Knights in this ground breaking ceremony. It is so popular that it is offered weekly into June and the new ceremony shares and explains the Knights virtues of charity, unity, and fraternity for all friends & relatives who wish to witness the ceremony. Congratulations to Chad and Kelly and we look forward to getting together in person soon!

Contact Dave Rigenbach at (419) 571-0800 or MansfieldKofC687@gmail.com for more information about joining the Knights during this unique opportunity.

Daily Prayer



Sunday, May 24, 2020

Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord /
Seventh Sunday of Easter

✠ All you peoples clap your hands,
shout to God with cries of gladness.

Psalm 47

page 404

Reading

Matthew 28:16–20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshipped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Reflection

The solemnity of the Ascension can be understood as the end of the earthly ministry of Jesus and the beginning of the community of believers that we know as the Church. The description of Jesus’ return to the Father, in the first reading from Acts and in the Gospel, is set in the company of the disciples. Jesus’ instruction to the disciples today is to continue his work and his teachings to all nations. This divine mission continues to this day. We too are the messengers of that mandate. We are not alone in this work. Jesus assures us that he is with us always, “until the end of the age.”

Prayers

others may be added

With Easter joy, we pray:

◆ **Risen Lord, hear our prayer.**

That leaders of nations put an end to religious persecutions, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That those who spread the Gospel in their missionary ministries be courageous, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That those who were baptized in this Easter season always be faithful to the Gospel, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For baptismal preparation teams, that they find fulfillment in their ministry, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

Almighty and eternal God,
you have received the Risen Lord into
your eternal glory.
Grant that we who are called to continue
his mission in this world
may be faithful to his commands
and come one day to share in that
same glory.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

✠ All you peoples clap your hands,
shout to God with cries of gladness.

"PUSHED" OUT ON MISSION

There is a delightful character in the original Dr. Dolittle Tales called the "Pushmi-Pullyu." It is a beast with two identical halves, with a head at each end. No matter which direction the beast walks, one end is the "push me" and the other is the "pull you." Today's feast is a bit like that in the life of the church. In the book of the Acts of the Apostles, it is the ascension of Christ that calls for the Holy Spirit, which consequently sends or "pushes" the church out on its mission. This is the message that we hear from the angels today as they tell the friends of Jesus not to look up into the clouds, but to get busy. It is the message of Jesus himself in Matthew's Gospel, as he sends them out to baptize. He also tells them, "I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). And it is this message, confident in faith that Jesus has ascended to shouts of joy, that "pulls" us along to our final destiny. The life of the faithful disciple, sent into the world on mission, will one day know the same risen, ascended glory.

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DEVOTED TO PRAYER

Today, as we await Pentecost, we come to the end of the baptismal homily from Peter that we have heard over the past few weeks. This homily was written by a realist who knew the joy and the glory of a Resurrection faith, but also knew that the strength of that faith would be put to the test and tried in suffering. Earlier this year we heard Jesus preach, "Blessed are you when they insult you . . . because of me" (Matthew 5:11) and this is echoed today by Peter. These words are also formed in the image of Christ who prays to the Father in heaven today, a prayer that is placed in John's Gospel right before Jesus endures his suffering and death. Our awaiting the Spirit, awaiting our mission for Christ means that we are, most likely, awaiting some sort of trial and suffering. We don't endure the same degree of persecution that Peter and John knew, but each of us has our faith put to the test eventually. And it is for this reason that we, like Jesus and like those faithful followers gathered in the upper room, devote ourselves to prayer.

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TODAY'S READINGS

First Reading — To meet their growing needs, the community chooses seven reputable men to serve the new Greek believers (Acts 6:1-7).

Psalm — Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you (Psalm 33).

Second Reading — We, like living stones, let ourselves be built into a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:4-9).

Gospel — "Show us the Father," Philip asks Jesus. To which Jesus replies: "Whoever sees me, sees the Father" (John 14:1-12).

The English translation of the Psalm Responses from *Lectionary for Mass* © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Acts 19:1-8; Ps 68:2-3ab, 4-5acd, 6-7ab; Jn 16:29-33

Tuesday: Acts 20:17-27; Ps 68:10-11, 20-21; Jn 17:1-11a

Wednesday: Acts 20:28-38; Ps 68:29-30, 33-36ab; Jn 17:11b-19

Thursday: Acts 22:30; 23:6-11; Ps 16:1-2a, 5, 7-11; Jn 17:20-26

Friday: Acts 25:13b-21; Ps 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20ab;
Jn 21:15-19

Saturday: Acts 28:16-20, 30-31; Ps 11:4, 5, 7; Jn 21:20-25

Sunday: Vigil: Gn 11:1-9 or Ex 19:3-8a, 16-20b or Ez 37:1-14
or Jl 3:1-5; Ps 104:1-2, 24, 35, 27-28, 29-30;
Rom 8:22-27; Jn 7:37-39 Day: Acts 2:1-11;
Ps 104:1, 24, 29-31, 34; 1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13;
Jn 20:19-23

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