

**For The Bulletin Of
May 17, 2015**

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

When a very fine school principal retires, we might overhear one of the teachers say, “It will be difficult for the school board to fill her shoes.” Or, if a skilled and versatile worker dies of a heart attack, the boss might say, “It will be difficult to fill his shoes.” Filling the shoes of someone beloved, someone uniquely qualified, someone highly professional can be pretty daunting. Personalities definitely play a part. So, it’s not simply a matter of getting the work done; it’s also a matter of how the work gets done, which raises the question of relationship. The better one relates to others, the more difficult it is to fill that person’s “shoes” when he or she is gone.

In today’s gospel, Jesus is taking His leave of the disciples. He commissions them to “fill His shoes.”

The ascension marks the completion of Jesus’ historical ministry and the beginning of our own commission to proclaim the Gospel. We are not forced to proclaim the Gospel, nor do we do this on our own authority. We undertake our mission “through the Holy Spirit” and manifest the Holy Spirit through our mission. But always the mission is Christ’s. At first this might seem an impossible commission: how can we expect to “fill Jesus’ shoes?” On our own authority we cannot. In addition to His commission to “proclaim the gospel,” Jesus also promised His disciples that signs would accompany

their work attesting that Jesus remains with them.

What an awesome honor it is to be disciples of Christ – we are the ones who “fill His shoes” in the world today! What meaning this accords the ascension – by returning to His rightful place at the hand of God, Jesus entrusts His mission to us. As the Jesus of history takes His leave of this world, it is clear that he intends His saving mission to continue. Seemingly without question, fear, or hesitation, the disciples “went forth.” But they did not go forth alone: “the Lord worked with them.” The mission, the work, and the signs are of the Lord Jesus. The disciples “who went forth and preached everywhere” were of the Lord Jesus. This relationship is the guarantee of Jesus’ continued mission. So the gospel raises this question for disciples today: Are we of the Lord Jesus?

Living The Paschal Mystery

Before we even celebrate Pentecost we are already hearing about our taking up the mission of Christ. This mission describes our Christian living – preaching the Gospel. Ascension is a call to all the baptized, reminding us that baptism is far more than having original sin taken away; it is a receiving of the Spirit by which we are grafted onto the Body of Christ. Baptism is our Pentecost and it includes a mission. It initiates us into a way of life where by we are of the Lord Jesus.

The gospel reminds us that the bearers of the Good News – those who continue Jesus’ saving mission today – are ordinary people. This would seem to be an overwhelming and impossible task. How can we fill Jesus’ shoes and

continue the divine saving work? We can't, on our own. But, Jesus assured us that He would work with us. Always, the mission is Christ's and we accomplish it by the strength and life of the Spirit Who dwells in us who are baptized. It is the Spirit Who works in us. This is why ordinary people can with enthusiasm, commitment, and love – and without question, fear, or hesitation – take up Jesus' saving mission.

As we celebrate yet another aspect of the resurrection of Jesus in the Ascension, how do today's scripture readings touch your life?

- My life proclaims the Gospel when...One way I need to grow in living the Gospel is...
- One sign that the risen Lord is working in, through, and with me is...
- Signs that show I am of the Lord Jesus are...

About Liturgy: Celebrating Ascension On Sunday

Most dioceses have transferred the celebration of the Ascension to the Seventh Sunday of Easter. In addition to the obvious pastoral reasons for this decision – more people will actually celebrate this important mystery if it takes place on Sunday when people are used to attending Liturgy – there are also good theological reasons for this transfer of the festival from Thursday to Sunday.

The synoptic Gospels present a different time frame for the Easter-Ascension-Pentecost events than does John's gospel. Matthew, Mark, and Luke take a more historical approach: Jesus' ascension happened on the fortieth day after the resurrection (John's gospel has

Jesus ascending on Easter evening), with Pentecost being celebrated on the fiftieth day. If the Ascension is transferred to Sunday, then Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost are all celebrated on the same day of the week – Sunday, the Lord's Day. The advantage of this is that it challenges a historical approach and helps us integrate these events into a single mystery of salvation. Our annual celebration of the paschal mystery is not a historical reenactment of those events of long ago, but a here-and-now celebration of the reality of what it means to be baptized into Jesus' death and resurrection, what it means for us to receive the Holy Spirit, and how we are to continue today Jesus' saving mission.

When the celebration of the Ascension is transferred from Thursday to Sunday, then the Liturgy of the Seventh Sunday of Easter is omitted.

SPRED Students Celebrate Confirmation and First Eucharist

Today during our 10:00 a.m. Liturgy, students in our SPRED program will receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist. Our thanks and gratitude to **Vicki McCoy** and the catechists of our SPRED program for their preparation of the candidates: **Michelle Marie Gonzales and Kevin Ottosen.**

May the Love you experience today continue to fill all the days of your lives.

Pentecost

Next Sunday is Pentecost, the Great Fiftieth Day, and the conclusion of the Easter Season. The color for the day is RED and we invite you to wear something red to contribute to the festivity of the liturgy and its

environment. Also, during the 10:00 am Liturgy, our Knights of Columbus will be participating in all of the ministries as Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Ushers, Greeters, and Adult Acolytes.

CCISCO Night Walk Against Violence

Last Friday evening, **Carole Miller, Armando Vasquez, and Steve Rojek** joined me for the monthly Night Walk Against Violence. There are approximately 20 to 25 witnesses from various churches participating as we gathered at the Church of God – Holy at the intersection of E. 18th and A Streets.

The next Night Walk will take place on Friday, June 12th. The site for the witness is yet to be determined. Please watch the Insert for this information.

Thank You

...to our faithful volunteer parishioners who arrive early each Saturday morning to clean and prepare the church and parish hall for the weekend: **Carole Miller, Angela Bueno, Emilia Freking, Mency Osborne, Rose Salamanca, Nancy Santos, June Bajet, Steve Rojek, and Alfred Madoshi.**

...and to our faithful volunteer parishioners who also clean and maintain the bathrooms in both the church and parish hall: **Steve Rojek, Gino Ramos, Mary Ewing, and Harlan Young.**

...to **Monika Kauer** who has done such a great job of caring for and maintaining the Easter Environment!

Rose Lafferty's 100th Birthday

Last Sunday was an historic milestone for our parish as our first parishioner reached the age of 100 years! **Rose Lafferty** was honored at the conclusion of the 10:00 a.m. Eucharist as she

celebrates and thanks God for 100 years of life and service. I was fortunate to be able to present her with the Diocesan Medal of Merit, the highest honor our local church can pay to one of its members. The Citation from Bishop Barber recognized Rose's service to the community, the parish, and the Diocese. She has served as a catechist for Faith Formation, Confirmation, RCIA, and Scripture Study in each parish to which she has belonged, as well as being a Charter Member of St. Ignatius of Antioch and a "Harvester," the group of founding members who raised the money to purchase the property and build the present church building. She continues to teach Scripture Study each week on Thursday mornings.

Following the Liturgy at which the entire congregation sang "Happy Birthday!" a festive reception was held in the parish hall. The tables were beautifully decorated with white tablecloths and bud vases with dark pink roses. A Luncheon of potato, macaroni, green, and jello salads, sliced meats, cheeses, and casseroles was prepared by parishioners along with a dessert table featuring brownies, cookies, cheese cake, cupcakes, and a beautifully decorated 100th Birthday Cake. As the candles were lighted on her cake, all present sang "Happy Birthday" once again.

Rose was deeply grateful and at times overwhelmed emotionally as waves of parishioners stopped to greet her, thank her, and wish her all the best.

Many thanks to **Steve and Frances Rojek, Mary Lucido, Annette Pisani, Lorraine Lohmeier, Will Avitabile and Catherine Vidaurri, Ann Peck** and

all those who provided such delicious food for the reception.

Eucharistic Minister Training

All Eucharistic Ministers are invited to a training and updating session on Sunday, June 7th, immediately following the 10:00 a.m. Liturgy. This will be an opportunity to renew our procedures and protocols, to practice the setting of the Holy Table, renewing our understanding of terminology, how we move in the sacred space, as well as rededicating our commitment to this ministry.

This training is also open to anyone in the parish who would like to become a Eucharistic Minister. The facilitators of this ministry are **Harlan Young and Steve Andreatta** and we are grateful for all the work they do in keeping this ministry going. I will also be present to contribute to the training.

Please put the date on your calendar and plan to be present: **Sunday, June 7th, immediately following the 10:00 a.m. Liturgy.**

Altar Servers Pizza Night

All Altar Servers are invited to a Pizza Night on Tuesday, June 16th, in the parish hall. It will begin at 7:00 p.m. We are grateful to our Pastoral Associate, **Peter Degl'Innocenti**, who facilitates this ministry. If you have any questions, please give us a call at the parish office. Also, please call to let us know you will be attending so that we have sufficient pizza and soft drinks.

Spring Staff Day

The Pastoral Staff will be away all day on Wednesday, May 20th for their Annual Spring Staff Day. This gives us

an opportunity to reflect on the immediate past year of pastoral ministry and to evaluate all that has taken place. It is also a special time of prayer for one another and for the parish. All pastoral staff members undergo an annual "Review of Ministry" which addresses their specific areas of pastoral responsibility and which we also reflect upon during our session together.

Please keep us in your prayers and ask God to continue to lead and guide us as we serve you.

Merciless zealots in defense of life and truth

[Robert Mickens](#) | *May. 11, 2015* [A Roman Observer](#)

Pope Francis' decision to call an extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy looks more and more urgent with each passing day.

Several incidents in the past couple of weeks here in Rome alone suggest there is a great need for the entire church to reflect deeply on how the acceptance and imitation of God's mercy, forgiveness and unfailing love make up the central tenet of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

Sadly, among those who seem least inclined to embrace this reality are some of the church's ordained leaders -- clergymen at every level of the hierarchy and those preparing to join them. A number of these individuals are quite prominent. And since the little group of which they are a part has become loud and well-organized, one might

mistakenly think they represent the majority of all our deacons, priests and bishops.

Pray God that they don't.

But -- at least publicly -- they have been promoting petitions, giving interviews and spearheading events that seem to be aimed more at making sure people pay for their mistakes -- and, at times, pay dearly -- rather than finding a way to offer them God's mercy.

One of the most recent and high-profile incidents was Italy's fifth annual National March for Life, which took place on Sunday in Rome. Thousands of marchers (organizers claim there were more than 40,000) gathered near St. Peter's Square for the pope's noontime blessing and then made their way through the center of the city. Their final destination was a small square just beneath the ancient Circus Maximus near a church where tourists line up to snap photos in front of the famous Bocca della Verità (Mouth of Truth).

But like many groups that identify as pro-life in the United States, numerous organizations that joined the Italian march were clearly not pro-life at all, at least not in the broad sense. The slogans they displayed on banners or sang in protest-like chants added up to saying no to three things and three things alone: abortion, euthanasia and same-sex marriage.

One would have looked in vain for even a single sign calling for an end to the death penalty. And unless the sun was just too blinding to see them, there were no banners to ban the bomb or protest placards to put an end to war. As for

outcries against the immorally lucrative international arms trade that continues to stoke the "piecemeal" Third World War, as Pope Francis calls it, none could be heard.

Italy's March for Life secured the official backing of six Vatican officials. They included Cardinals Angelo Amato (Congregation for the Causes of Saints), Marc Ouellet (Bishops) and Zenon Grocholewski (retired), as well as Archbishops Vincenzo Paglia (Pontifical Council for the Family) and Zygmunt Zimowski (health care). Cardinal Raymond Burke was actually present at the rally. He was one of 20 non-Italian bishops who outnumbered their Italian confreres in endorsing the initiative. Heads of only 15 of Italy's more than 220 dioceses formally sponsored the event.

But among them -- and perhaps also for strategic motives -- was Archbishop Bruno Forte. He, too, sent a written endorsement but did not attend the march. Of course, he is the same theologian-bishop traditionalists fiercely criticized last October after he put accommodating language about gay Catholics in the midterm report at the synod on the family.

The traditionalists were out in spades on Sunday, and many of them then attended a Tridentine Mass that Msgr. Marco Agostini offered for the marchers. The 53-year-old priest from Verona has been a papal master of ceremonies the last six years.

The evening before the march and the Mass, there was also eucharistic adoration for the "reparation for the crime of abortion." Reparation is a favorite theme in traditionalist circles, where, apparently, there are some

questions about just how absolute is God's mercy and forgiveness. The traditionalists place a greater emphasis on divine judgment, sacrifice, penance and the fires of purgatory. It seems as if it all boils down to paying for one's sins and mistakes.

Not mercy, but sacrifice. Not forgiveness, but repayment of the debt. Unfortunately, a similar attitude can be found in the alarmist pleas that are urging the pope not to allow this October's synod to change a single iota of the church's law and discipline regarding marriage and sexuality. There are at least three or four groups frantically trying to whip up support for petitions in this regard.

A right-wing university group for the "defense of tradition, family and property" claims to have garnered more than 200,000 signatures for an online petition to the pope to "save the family." They paint a dark picture of "dissident Catholic pressure groups" that are "bombarding" the synod to "water down the indissolubility of marriage; allow the reception of Holy Communion for divorced and civilly remarried couples; make the Church 'LGBT-friendly'; and approve same-sex civil unions."

Two other petitions voicing similar concerns are currently trying to solicit signatures from priests in Britain and in the United States.

In the midst of all this, several cardinals and a small group of the world's roughly 5,000 bishops are engaging a number of theologians to come up with arguments to help block any development of the church's teaching on marriage and family matters.

Two of them -- Cardinals George Pell of the Vatican and Peter Erdo of Esztergom-Budapest, Hungary -- predicted in separate interviews last week that "nothing will change" at the synod. What is most troublesome is the fact that the Hungarian cardinal has a key role in the synod as its "relator general," a sort of moderator in charge of helping to frame the discussions. The synod "will massively endorse the tradition" of the church, according to Pell. "I don't anticipate any deviation from that at all," he told a few hundred people (including Burke) who attended a conference Saturday in Rome in anticipation of the Italian pro-life rally. These uncompromising defenders of truth, tradition and life say the church has no authority to develop, alter or modify teachings that, they insist, come directly from Jesus. They are certainly sincere when they express the conviction that they are defending a law of God that cannot be changed.

Pope Francis has taken up the urgent challenge of trying to help them -- and all Christians -- to understand what is too difficult for most of us humans to comprehend: Namely, that greater than any of God's laws is God's absolute and boundless mercy.

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