

Lancaster Saint Bernadette

&

Bremen Saint Mary



The Disputation of the Holy Sacrament

celebration of these holy days

The Feast of the Ascension of the Lord

May 13, 2018

St Bernadette Parish

1343 Wheeling Road NE (740) 654 • 1893
LANCASTER, OH 43130-8701

St Mary Parish

602 Marietta Street (740) 569 • 7738
BREMEN, OH 43107

stbernadetteparish . net

cover picture: **The Disputation of the Sacrament**

This painting is emblematic of today's feast ... and of the next three Sundays' feasts!

- It gives us an inkling of what Jesus has accomplished for us in **the Ascension** (today) when Jesus "goes to prepare a place for us, that where he is we also may be."
- It reminds us of the gift of the Holy Spirit (the Church founding gift of **Pentecost**, celebrated next Sunday), represented by the dove in the middle of the painting, "proceeding from the Father and the Son" (portrayed just above).
- It shows the centrality of that Trinity of Persons, utterly united, which will be our cause of joy on the Feast of **the Holy Trinity** (in two weeks' time).
- It presents men on earth pondering and struggling to articulate the wonder of the Holy Eucharist as we too ponder and adore on the Feast of the Body of Christ, **Corpus Christi** (concluding this cluster of feasts on June 3 this year).

a fresco (5 x 7.7 meters) painted (1509-1510) as part of a series of frescoes, by Rafael Sanzio (1483-1520) in a reception room in the Apostolic Palace of the Vatican City, Rome

our parishes

Fr Thomas Kessler (614) 634 • 0499 *wnthomaskessler @ icloud . com*
pastor

at St Bernadette Parish

Jeff Carpenter (740) 681 • 9918 *carpenter.277 @ osu . edu*
deacon

Mark Scarpitti (740) 438 • 3970 *dcn.mark @ frontier . com*
deacon

Ann Essman (740) 653 • 9347 *aessman001 @ att . net*
pastoral minister

Steve Huber (740) 654 • 3137 *shuber57 @ yahoo . com*
facilities coordinator

Angie & Kent Kerns (740) 654 • 2588 *kwkerns @ gmail . com*
religious education

Liz Latorre (740) 243 • 1872 *lizlatorre @ gmail . com*
liturgical music

The St Bernadette Parish office is in the Mary Good Center, across the back parking lot from the school.

Hours: 9 AM-1 PM, MWThF; 11 AM-1 PM, Tu.

1343 Wheeling Rd NE, Lancaster, OH 43130-8701 (740) 654 • 1893

Ben Factor *b_factor @ lancaster . k12.oh.us*
liturgical music

Sarah Borah *sbora920 @ gmail . com*

The St Mary Parish office is at the church vestibule.

Hours: 9-11 AM, Tuesdays.

602 Marietta St, Bremen, OH 43107 (740) 569 • 7738

at both parishes

Stephen Karnes (740) 654 • 1893 *stbernbook @ gmail . com*
business manager

Kathy Kehnast (740) 654 • 1893 *stbernaparish @ yahoo . com*
pastoral coordinator

Julie & Chase Stalford (740) 808 • 7294 *maristellaspri @ gmail . com*
youth ministry

Saint Bernadette School

Pam Eltringham (740) 654 • 3137 *peltring @ cdeducation . org*

Barb Huber (740) 654 • 3137 *bhuber @ cdeducation . org*
secretary

Saint Bernadette School is located at

1325 Wheeling Rd, Lancaster, OH 43130-8701

stbernan @ cdeducation . org [www . stbernadetteschool . com](http://www.stbernadetteschool.com)

Bremen St Vincent de Paul (740) 569-7738

Lancaster St Vincent de Paul [www . svdplancasteroh . com](http://www.svdplancasteroh.com)

Diocese of Columbus [www . columbuscatholic . org](http://www.columbuscatholic.org)

Angels Nurture & Disciple (AND) [www . angelsAND . org](http://www.angelsAND.org)

sacramental life

Where

Our parishes are where Catholics worship. We can receive the Anointing of the Sick at any appropriate place from the appropriate minister. First reception of Eucharist and of Penance as well as reception of Baptism, Confirmation, and Matrimony may only be in **one's own parish church**, unless with good reason the pastor deems it **necessary** to do otherwise.

Baptism

To have a child baptized, parents must register and attend a class as a couple (unless attendance just isn't possible, in which case some discussion with Kathy Kehnast will be necessary). Sessions are held quarterly for both parishes. Try to attend before the child is born. If you are expecting or if you somehow haven't gotten around to having an older child baptized, call Kathy to make plans now.

Please don't ask if you "have to go." This is an opportunity to meet with parents of children about the same age as your little one; those parents are in the same wonderful boat as you are.

At least one parent must be a practicing Catholic. Both godparents need to be practicing Catholics. If you don't **attend Sunday Mass regularly (a major component of being a practicing Catholic!)**, there is something you can do about it: Start coming to Sunday Mass.

Penance

The priest is available for Penance

- at St Bernadette Saturdays at 3 PM and Thursdays at 5:30 PM, and
- at St Mary Bremen on Sunday at 8 AM.

Every Catholic priest is **available whenever there is a need**. There are Penance opportunities for St Bernadette School children four times in the year so that they will learn the beauty of frequent confession. The Church's law requires us to receive the Penance at least once a year.

Anointing and Care of the Sick

The priest gives the Anointing of the Sick to one who is dangerously ill, facing major surgery, or suffering from the ravages of old age.

We celebrate the sacrament communally at a Sunday Mass before Advent and during the Easter season so that we can all pray with you **for "health of mind and body."**

The priest brings Penance, Anointing, and Holy Communion to the sick or shut in. It is very helpful to call the parish office to let us know before a hospitalization or when it has been too long since the sacraments were last available.

Holy Matrimony

Couples wishing to marry should contact the parish office six months before a wedding. Why so long? Because **this sacrament, not just the ceremony, requires serious preparation**. And the Church needs to be involved in that preparation. Catholics who marry outside the Church have left the sacramental life and need to change that situation before receiving the other sacraments. The Church needs to **support couples through the years of married life**. That's why our diocese offers programs to enhance married life. To learn about these programs, watch the weekly bulletin.

At Prayer with the Church

The Church Prays at Mass Today

Gladden us with holy joys, almighty God,
and make us rejoice with devout thanksgiving,
for the Ascension of Christ your Son is our exaltation, and,
where the Head has gone before in glory,
the Body is called to follow in hope.
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.

Mass Intentions This Week

May 14, Monday	8:20 AM	St Bernadette	Robert Guinan
May 15, Tuesday	8:20 AM	Bremen St Mary	Margaret Turner
May 16, Wednesday	8:20 AM	St Bernadette	Barbara Egan
May 17, Thursday	6 PM	St Bernadette	Diana Harris
May 18, Friday	8:20 AM	St Bernadette	Fr James Cszaszar

Hear God's Word

May 13 Ascension of the Lord	Acts	1:1-11	Ps Eph	47 1:17-23	Mark 16:15-20
May 14, Monday Saint Matthias, apostle	Acts	1:15-26	Ps	113	John 15:9-17
May 15, Tuesday Saint Isidore	Acts	20:17-27	Ps	68	John 17:1-11
May 16, Wednesday	Acts	20:28-38	Ps	68	John 17:11-19
May 17, Thursday	Acts	22:30-23:11	Ps	16	John 17:20-26
May 18, Friday Pope Saint John I	Acts	25:13-21	Ps	103	John 21:15-19
May 19, Saturday	Acts	28:16-31	Ps	11	John 21:20-25
May 20 Pentecost Sunday	Acts	2:1-11	Ps 1 Cor	104 12:3-13	John 20:19-23

Pope Francis Asks Us ...

to pray this month that the lay faithful may fulfill their specific mission, by responding with creativity to the challenges that face the world today.

May is Mary's Month

Mary is the mother *par excellence*! She is the Mother of God and our Mother. Making May her month is a fairly modern step; it isn't found in the ancient liturgical calendars, although there is a feast of the coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven (May 31). But **if you had been casting around for a good time to celebrate a month for Mary, May might well have been your choice.** It is a beautiful month (even if you have allergies). Winter is decidedly over, the fields and trees are green, lots of flowers are in bloom, cattle are back in the fields. It is **a month of new life and of hope.** That fits.

At St Mary Parish (*her* parish) we will pray the rosary every Sunday morning in May before the 8:30 AM Mass.

At St Bernadette Parish (*her dear young friend's* parish) we will continue to pray the rosary before the 11 AM Mass.

Catholic Communications Campaign

Next Sunday at Mass we collect for the Catholic Communications Campaign. This campaign connects people with Christ, here and around the world in developing countries, through the internet,

television, radio, and print media. And fifty percent of funds collected remain in our diocese to fund local communications efforts. Your support helps spread the gospel message. To learn more, visit www.usccb.org/ccc.

Prayer for Our Diocese

Good and gracious God,
we praise and we thank you for the many graces
that you have showered upon us over the past 150 years
in this Diocese of Columbus.

You have brought together faithful men and women
from many cultures, races, and ethnic groups,
and through your Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit,
have molded them into one Catholic Church.

With gratitude, we remember those who have gone before us
for their commitment, prayer, and work.

We honor their inheritance with our own devotion to the Faith
and with a desire to pass it on to another generation.

We give thanks as well for all those
devoted clergy, religious brothers and sisters, and lay people
who have served the diocese so well.

Through the continued gift of your love and wisdom,
stir up in us a lively faith,
a devotion to the worship of your great name,
and a desire to serve others,
as we await in hope the great day of the coming again
of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

For 150 years, you, O God, have been
our guide and inspiration.

We beseech you to remain with us
on this journey of life and faith.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Both Parishes

Anointing the Sick

We will celebrate the **Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick** at **Sunday Mass today.** You should be anointed if you are

- a Catholic, age 7 or older,
- in the state of grace, and
- suffering serious health problems —
 - (like chronic or dangerous diseases,
 - old age, or
 - the prospect of major surgery).

Determine before Mass begins if you will receive the sacrament, sit in the front row or at the end of the pew, and come to the altar when you are called (or notify an usher to ask the priest to come to your place in the pew if coming forward is difficult). Everybody else: Pray for our sick. Keep them in your prayers.

Happy Mother's Day

Participate in the PDHC's **Baby Bottle Campaign** by collecting your loose change **from Mother's Day to Father's Day** to help local parents and would-be parents in need. Spare change from baby bottles goes a long way to continue offering free pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, material assistance and life-affirming programs to strengthen families. Grab a bottle and bring it back on Father's Day. Let us give thanks to our father and mother for choosing life and help a local family do the same.

+

The Sacraments of Initiation !

Pray for our parishioners who this Easter Season have received the Sacraments of Initiation:

already baptized Christian and now received into the full Communion of the Catholic Church and confirmed

from St Bernadette
Savannah Dalton

confirmed

from St Bernadette

Jane Uhl,	Olivia Carbol	Susan Craaybeek
Alexis Cymanski	Eve Darfus	Sam Finck
Mary Frazier	Leo Gauerke	Hunter Jamison
Katelyn Jarrell	Joshua Latorre	Olivia McCormick
Nick Pechar	Brennan Quaintance,	Luke Sharp
Emily Taylor	Jack Tencza	Brooke Vogel
Diana Woo		

from Bremen St Mary

Brooke Holt

from Sugar Grove St Joseph

Mina Gronbach	Janessa Hoover	Kolton Kilbarger
Julia Ribo	Elizabeth Cooperrider	

received Holy Communion for the first time

from St Bernadette

Ellie Barringer	Ella Reed	Ella Sanford
Flora Woo	Christopher Fitzgibbon	

from Bremen St Mary

Kara Borah	Christopher Springer	Mason Holt
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Also pray for several others who are at various stages of preparation for entry into the Church later. And pray for the grace for yourself to welcome and invite others to the sacramental life!

what you gave in the collection in April

St Bernadette	Apr 1	Apr 8	Apr 15	Apr 22	Apr 29	Totals
weekly	6,425	7,302	5,737	6,331	3,777	29,572
electronic funds transfer	2,818	176	176	176	176	3,522
educational support	275	96	100	230	5	706
Total given to parish	9,518	7,574	6,013	6,737	3,958	33,800
Rice Bowl	2,187	120	13	50	53	2,423
Good Friday	742	62	10	0	10	824
Aid to E & Central Europe	0	116	55	50	5	226
Total sent away	2,929	298	78	100	68	3,473
Bremen St Mary	Apr 1	Apr 8	Apr 15	Apr 22	Apr 29	Totals
weekly	1,675	4,486	1,955	1,050	1,209	10,375
Total given to parish	1,675	4,486	1,955	1,050	1,209	10,375
Rice Bowl	5	189	25	72	0	291
Good Friday	10	0	5	20	0	35
St Vincent de Paul	465	455	125	120	165	1,330
Aid to E & Central Europe	0	30	70	55	0	155
Total sent away	480	674	225	267	165	1,811

St Bernadette Parish

Happy Birthday

St Bernadette's former pastor Monsignor Robert Noon turns 95th on May 15. May also marks the 67th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. He is living in a rather active retirement at the Villas of St Theresè. If you would like to send him a card, his address is 5253 E Broad Street #127, Columbus, Ohio 43213.

Ministry at Mass at St Bernadette

+	lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion
May 12 at 4 PM Saturday, Vigil of the Ascension	Becky Kuhn	Mallory, Mason & Mitchell Ortiz	Bob & Angie Christy Jim Kuhn Sandy Landefeld Brad Rider Craig Shaw
May 13 at 11 AM Ascension of the Lord	John Hartig	Anna Hartig, Brooke & Bryson Vogel	Pat Dreyer Teresa Hartig Jim & Rita Merk Ben Peters Jean Robertson
Monday, 8:20 AM	Mary Jane Vajen	Daschel Neighbor Hyde O'Rielly	Pat Dreyer Kathy Kehnaest
Wednesday, 8:20 AM	Bob Christy	Silus Hopkins Isabelle Lazar	Angie Christy Mary Jane Vajen
Thursday, 6 PM	Tara Craaybeek	Kyndra Nagle Amelia Robertson	Lee Guinan Paul Lonergan
Friday, 8:20 PM	Jim Merk	Morgan Cox Olivia Reynolds	Rita Merk Mary Jane Vajen
May 19 at 4 PM Saturday Vigil of Pentecost	Brad Rider	Kendall Cox, Becca Fuller, Joey Mannella	Terry Carpenter Marguerite Grimm Lee Guinan Kathy Kehnaest Denise McGuire Mickey Steyaert
May 20 at 11 AM Pentecost Sunday	Amy Woo	Gunner Robertson, Diana & Sarah Woo	Larry Sanford Teresa Scarpitti Anna Seigny David Shonk Mary Jane Vajen Becky Wickham

Send a Child to St Bernadette School

St Bernadette School **invites you to register your children now** for grades preschool through 5th for the 2018-2019 school year. Private tours and classroom observations are available at any time. Want to send your children to a fine Catholic school like St Bernadette, St Mary's middle school, or Fisher Catholic High School, but you wonder about the cost? Assistance is available. For information, call the school office at (740) 654-3137.

The **preschool program** offers a progressive learning approach, and kindergarten-readiness goals, within a flexible schedule. **Elementary grades** (full-day kindergarten through 5th grade) offer a highly respected program of academic excellence and positive experiences.

St Bernadette School offers a full day **kindergarten program** that fosters the academic, social and emotional growth and development of each child in a very family-friendly environment. Studies show that the advantages of a full-day program far outweigh a half-day, including but certainly not limited to, full-day kindergartners learning more literacy and mathematics than those in half-day programs.



St Bernadette Blood Drive

Our next Red Cross Blood Drive is scheduled for Saturday, May 19, from 9 AM-2 PM in the parish hall. There will be lunch and cupcakes—and other pleasant surprises!—for all our donors. Since the first birthday drive in 2007, **we have collected over 1000 units of blood**, saving up to 3000 lives. Call (740) 974-5040 or go to [www . redcrossblood . org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) to make an appointment or sign up to donate. The need for blood is constant—every two seconds someone in the US needs blood. Each day the American Red Cross must collect approximately 14,000 units of blood to meet the needs of patients at 2,600 hospitals and transfusion centers.

Shawl Ministry

The St. Bernadette Shawl Ministry seeks to provide **comfort to bereaved and seriously ill friends**. If you are interested in crocheting shawls for our parish, call Terry Carpenter at (740) 681-9918. Yarn is provided and lessons are available for those who would like to learn to crochet.

Bremen St Mary Parish

Vacation Church School

St Mary Parish will host children from parishes all over our area for a week of fun, learning, and prayer at a very special Vacation Church School again this summer, on the evenings of June 18-22, **at Schmelzer's Grove**. Anyone (from either parish!) interested in helping should contact Sarah Borah at (740) 569-7738.

Ministry at Mass at St Mary

+	lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Communion	gifts	sacristan / usher
Ascension May 13 at 8:30 AM	Joe Young	Reagan Conrad, Nicole Terry	Angi Skinner, Jim Schmelzer, Cathy Young	Joe & Cathy Young	Jim Schmelzer
Pentecost May 20 at 8:30 AM	Susan Foltz	Brooke Holt, Carly Kunkler	Neil Boch, Wyatt Borah, Susan Foltz	John Schoenlaub family	Ralph Mohler

Around Central Ohio

Dealing with the Opiate Addiction Epidemic

For **resources and suggestions** for families, schools, and parishes to respond to the opiate addiction epidemic in Ohio, visit [www . columbuscatholic . org/drug-awareness](http://www.columbuscatholic.org/drug-awareness) or contact the Social Concerns office at (614) 241-2540.

Jubilee of Marriages

Bishop Campbell is inviting couples married at least 25 years and celebrating an anniversary divisible by 5 ... and, in fact, any couple married more than 60 years is invited to the Jubilee of Anniversaries to be held on Sunday, June 24, at St Andrew Church, 1899 McCoy Rd, Upper Arlington, at 2:30 PM. The occasion will begin with Mass followed by a reception. Registration forms are available through the parish or register online at [columbuscatholic . org/marriage-ministry-1](http://columbuscatholic.org/marriage-ministry-1) or by calling the Marriage & Family Life Office at (614) 241-2560 x 5. RSVP by Wednesday, June 13. Names of couples registering before June

13 will be featured in the event program and *The Catholic Times*. Other couples will receive their certificate in the mail after the event.

Pilgrimage to Alabama

St Gabriel Radio's pilgrimage **to EWTN and the Shrine of the Blessed Sacrament** in Alabama is filling up fast. All-inclusive pricing: bus transportation, lodging, tours, and meals. The bus leaves on Wednesday, June 27, at 7 AM and returns on Saturday, June 30, at 6 PM, departing from 4747 Sawmill Road. For information or to register, visit the radio website or contact colleenl @ stgabrielradio . com or (614) 459-4820.

Put (a) Spring in Your Step

That's what you'll have after a **Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend**. The next two weekends in Central Ohio are July 13-15 and Sept 14-16. Marriage Encounter is where married couples can get away from jobs, kids, chores, and phones and focus only on each other. For information or to apply, contact Paul or Marilou Clouse at (614) 834-6880 or visit [www . wmcecolumbus . org](http://www.wmcecolumbus.org).

Weekly Confessions & Masses

But these times sometimes change, so call ahead!							
parish	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Penance
Bremen St Mary		8:20 AM					8 AM Sun
Lancaster St Bernadette	8:20 AM		8:20 AM	6 PM	8:20 AM	9 AM 1 st Sat	5:30 PM Thu, 3 PM Sat, 8:30 AM on First Sat
Lancaster St Mary	7 AM	9 AM	7 AM	9 AM			4 PM Sat
Lancaster St Mark	8 AM	8 AM	6 PM	8 AM	8 AM		5:30 PM Sat
Sugar Grove St Joseph	VARIES	12 PM	7 AM	12 PM	12PM		½ hour before Mass
Circleville St Joseph	9 AM	7 AM	9 AM		9 AM		4 PM Sat
Logan St John	8 AM	8 AM	9 AM		8 AM	9 AM	4 PM Sat
Fisher Catholic HS					2:40 PM		2 PM on First Fri

Catholic Men's Luncheon Club

The last Catholic Men's Luncheon Club for this Spring (no luncheons in July & August) will feature a talk by Deacon Chris Campbell of Immaculate Conception Parish. Deacon Campbell is principal of Bishop Watterson High School and will speak about Catholic education. On Friday, June 1, at St Patrick Church in downtown Columbus, Mass at 11:45 AM will be followed by lunch at 12:10 PM and Deacon Campbell's talk. Reservations are not necessary; \$10 covers the lunch and meeting. Bring a friend. For information on Catholic Men's Luncheons, visit [www . catholicmensministry . com/cmhc](http://www.catholicmensministry.com/cmhc) or contact George Harvey, CMLC President at [GLHarvey56 @ gmail . com](mailto:GLHarvey56@gmail.com).

Our Franciscan Friends Celebrate May

The Franciscan Sisters TOR invite you to celebrate their 30th anniversary at an **Open House and May Crowning** on Saturday, May 19, at their monastery at 369 Little Church Road, Toronto, Ohio. This family fun day includes pony rides, hayrides, a petting

zoo, and face painting, along with a “*Battle of the (Praise) Bands*” from 11 AM to 1:30 PM. Bands from various area churches will perform. Lunch is free. May Crowning will be held outdoors at 1:30 PM and the Pentecost Vigil Mass at 4 PM. No reservations necessary; donations are gratefully accepted. For information, visit [www . FranciscanSistersTOR . org](http://www.FranciscanSistersTOR.org) or call (740) 544-5542.

Irish Alumni Golf

Alumni of St. Mary, Bishop Fenwick and Fisher Catholic High Schools will play at Pleasant Valley Golf Course on Saturday, June 9, at 9 AM at \$150 per team. For information and to check availability contact Molly Neighbor at (740) 654-1231 or [mneighbor @ cdeducation . org](mailto:mneighbor@cdeducation.org).

Catholic Devotion to Mary

The Jubilee Museum in Columbus will host Fr Thomas Blau OP of St Patrick Church on Thursday, May 17, as he discusses the Biblical basis of Catholic devotion to Mary. Doors will open and light refreshments will be provided starting at 6:15 PM. Then Fr Blau will speak at 7. Admission is the regular Museum admission of \$10 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors.

The Difference

Between Giving Birth and Giving Life

Angels Nurture and Disciple, AND (formerly known as The Guardian Angels Program, gaP), is a support program serving single women struggling with an unexpected pregnancy. As an

extension of pregnancy care services, AND provides the single mom with a loving network of women (Angels) that will walk alongside her as she journeys through her pregnancy, birth, and infancy of her baby. Recognizing the numerous obstacles single parenthood presents, AND celebrates **her courage in choosing life for her unborn baby**, and hence strives **to break down any educational, financial, and emotional barriers that are preventing her from becoming the mother God intended her to be.**

If you have the desire to serve a mother during her time of crisis, become a part of this nurturing mission that is transforming lives and therefore generations to come. AND cannot function without the core strength provided by their volunteer base, the Choir of Angels. Angels have many roles, all critical to the support network. If you enjoy mentoring, cooking, caring for babies, hosting baby showers, writing letters of support, transporting and more, they need you!

Whether you have 1 hour @ month or 10, there is a need for you. Every mother is a gift to her baby; help AND show her just how much. For information, contact Monica Flynn at (614) 353-6765 or [monica @ angelsAND . org](mailto:monica@angelsAND.org).

Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love.

—Saint Mother Teresa

The Bishop’s Annual Appeal

This Year’s Theme: *Sharing His Love, Encouraging Hope*

First Report

BAA 2018 week 1	families	participating	pledged	average gift	paid	BAA goal
St Bernadette	450	44	\$18,390	\$ 418	\$5,600	\$36,305
% of goal		9.8%	50.7%		15.4%	
St Mary	135	17	\$10,650	\$626	\$6,250	\$13,121
% of goal		12.6%	81.2%		47.6%	
Diocese			\$1,285,142			\$6,750,000
% of goal			19%			

The BAA is a diocesan appeal for financial support. Your gift to the BAA will directly support these critical areas of need:

- Catholic education for our children through tuition assistance, capital repair grants for high schools, and operating aid for schools.
- The education and formation of seminarians discerning and answering the call to the priesthood.
- The vital work of serving parish catechetical leaders in parish and school religious education programs.
- Marriage preparation and enrichment programs supporting the vocation of traditional marriage, natural family planning programs, and family faith formation events.
- The formation and ministry of permanent deacons in our diocese.
- The education, spiritual cultivation, and evangelization of our multi-ethnic Catholic communities and the parishes serving them.
- The coordination of all liturgies presided at by Bishop Campbell, and sponsorship of diocesan events such as the Rite of Election and adult Confirmation.
- Unified programs for youth and young adult ministry that deepen the faith and involvement of our younger generations.

Appeal Prayer

Gracious and loving God, we are ever grateful for the many gifts which you have bestowed upon us.

We are especially thankful, dear Father, for the gift of your Son, Jesus.

May his Sacred Heart help us to know your infinite love for us, and may it give us the courage to continue his work in the world by

sharing his love and encouraging hope.

We pray that you will help us all respond to your love by imitating your generosity, as we consider the needs of all those living in our diocese.

May we touch the lives and hearts of others by our participation in this appeal.

May you send your Holy Spirit to dwell with us always, so that all we say and do will give you fitting praise.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.



What Jesus Was Accomplishing *for Us* When He Ascended Into Heaven

On the feast of the Ascension of the Lord we celebrate a really remarkable mystery of our Catholic faith. Let's call it **the day humanity crashed the gates of Heaven**. That's not the official name the Church gives to this feast day, I admit. It is just a way of trying to come to terms with **what is so spectacular about the Ascension** of the Lord into heaven.

Jesus' career on earth was over. He enabled his followers to understand what his life had meant and then told them that he had more in store for them. It wasn't simply over. They would go out to all the earth and tell the message of Jesus and the message about Jesus and the works he had worked. They would tell the world. And **it would set the world on fire**.

The followers of Jesus had gone forth. Gradually, little enclaves of followers of the way of Jesus developed and gradually grew. Their most effective tool was the impression they made when many of the lead figures were put to death for their efforts. One of their early members said, **"the Blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church."** Their motivation was not for lots of rewards; it was to share in the life of God.

Many people misunderstand what the afterlife amounts to in Christianity: Heaven is the reward and hell is the punishment. What God has in store for his beloved according to the teaching of the Christian Faith is something much brighter than that. And that is where the doctrine of the Ascension comes in.

According to the Gospel of Saint John, at the Last Supper on the night before he died, Jesus told his disciples "I am going **to prepare a place for you**." We would miss the point if we thought that he was simply going to a fine mansion and sprucing it up, adding some furnishings or even building on some spare rooms. He is the pure spirit who had come to earth to become flesh and dwell among us, all the while remaining spirit. His Father and the Holy Spirit are pure spirit. **Heaven is – and has been from all eternity – utterly spiritual. Only the angels, themselves spirits, dwell there with God.**

Humans are material and spiritual. They don't have any right to be in heaven. They just don't belong there by any merits of their own. God had created us in his own image and likeness. But the likeness had been marred from the get-go. Our first ancestors, Adam and Eve, had made a mess of things by disobeying the command of God in the garden of Eden. Their sin of disobedient pride is called original sin. It is our legacy, and by it we had ruled ourselves out from sharing the life of God in heaven.

Jesus belongs in heaven. But we don't. Heaven is spiritual and we are material. Sure we are also spiritual, but we since have damaged that spiritual likeness through sin, we don't belong. Or we wouldn't belong if that were the whole of the story. **What Jesus did by his saving death changed all that.** He died for our salvation. He rose to give us life. "Dying he destroyed our death, rising he restored our life." Death was **the human situation before the action of Jesus**. It was our destiny. And that was that. Life we had, but only for a little while. The psalmist had reminded us

Our life is over like a sigh. Our span is seventy years; or eighty for those who are strong.
And most of these are emptiness and pain. They pass swiftly and we are gone.

We flawed, material beings had ruled out the sharing of God's life that he had planned for us. And now he has said, "I go to prepare a place for you." Beings who are material and spiritual – which means human beings, because we are the only beings that are that way – are having a place prepared for us. That's what happens when Jesus – our savior – ascends into heaven forty days after Easter. That's what I mean by saying **he integrates heaven**.

We just didn't belong, for sin and sinful humanity had no place in heaven. But **Jesus, the God man, the spiritual and human Jesus has gone before us where we could not have dared to go**. There is humanity, perfect humanity, there. And we who have believed in Jesus and have been joined to him by baptism and have been nourished by his body and blood can have a place with him. Jesus has said,

"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.
For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

And he told them, "no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit." He promised his disciples and us, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day."

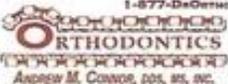
That last day, that entry into the kingdom of God, was put into gear, you might say, when Jesus ascended into heaven, when he went to prepare a place for us. **Humanity, which would otherwise have no place in heaven, has a place with God**. Life, which would have ended for us in our own individual deaths, now has the prospect of never being threatened, never having to end.

But there is something more: Jesus makes it possible to dwell in his Father's house. **To be part of the Father's household, to be adopted into the family of God.**

He who humbled himself to share in our humanity wants us to share in his divinity, to share in his divine life.

Heaven, which Christian teaching knows is the hope of humanity, is so much more than the reward system, so much more than the paradise island of a perfect and permanent holiday resort. It is the involvement in the life of God who is love. This is what we were made for, what we had forfeited by sin, what we are restored to by the action of Jesus. It is for the eternal life in this involvement in the utter joy of God's love that Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us **that where he is we also may be**. The only disaster would be to exclude ourselves from that. We can do that, but nobody has to. Jesus wants us to be with him. **For reasons that are unfathomable to us, he thinks we are worth the effort**. And it was a tremendous effort he made so that we could enter his Father's house.

— *Father Kessler*

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