

# THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

August 15, 2021



A huge heartfelt Thank You goes out to all who volunteered to make this year's parish festival successful. I am confident that this year's festival would have been an overwhelming success if it wasn't for

the two downpours that scattered the crowds. Just the same it was a success in spite of the rain. What was noticeable was that those who came had a good time and really wanted to get out and socialize. That in itself is a wonderful thing to take notice. It was indeed great for so many to get together and just visit with each other.

There were numerous individuals who stepped up to prepare and serve food and drinks. We thank all who sold tickets and manned booths. Thanks go out to all who ran the children's games (and adult games), who provided support as well as the set-up and cleanup work. Thank You especially go out to all who spent enormous amounts of time and energy in planning and executing those plans for the smooth running of the festival. In general, a huge thanks for all who pitched in to make this year's parish festival a success. There is no way that we could mention and thank all who worked this year but in short... God Bless all the wonderful people for their hard work, creativity, thoughtfulness, and imagination in doing things, great and small, to make the festival an enjoyment of all.

Today we are celebrating the Feast of the *Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary* which takes precedence over the 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time. The teaching of the Church is that the Blessed Virgin Mary was taken up into heaven, body and soul. This is a reasonable and consistent teaching concerning the long-standing tradition of the early Church about the mother of Jesus Christ: Mary. The basis of this teaching is founded in what the Church believes about Jesus Christ. To quote the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which in turn is a quote of Pius XII in his declaration of the dogma of the Assumption of Mary, we read... *"Finally, the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and conqueror of sin and death."* (CCC # 966.) Mary's Assumption into heaven is connected to her Immaculate Conception. It is also an affirmation of her "Fiat", her absolute "Yes" to God at the Annunciation. In considering Mary, from beginning to end, all is the movement of the Grace of God. It is the Grace of God in which Mary was conceived without the stain of original sin (Immaculate Conception). Mary's response to the Grace of God is her "Yes" to God when she conceived Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the Grace of God that is affirmed in her "Assumption." It is all the Grace of God.

There is one thing that I think we should consider when we think about the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Christian life that we live. This something cuts against the grain in the way human beings, who are tainted with the effects of original sin, think about the ways of God. We must remember that God does not call us to be channels of His grace and then abandons us after He gets what He wants. We must always remember that God does not selfishly use us, and in this case God did not "use" Mary. The very idea of God using someone is a violation of the very gift he bestowed on humanity from the very beginning: Free Will. God respects our Free Will. Mary, who is the model of all Christians, freely and willingly responded to the Grace of God with her "yes" to God. Her being taken up into heaven, her Assumption, is an

affirmation that God did not abandon her after Jesus's birth. God is always faithful.

Had we been observing the 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday in ordinary time we would be continuing our reading of the Gospel of St. John chapter 6. The verses we would have been reading for this Sunday are v. 51 – 58. We ended last Sunday's reading with Jesus' words... *"the bread I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."* This statement parallels the words of institution at the Last Supper: Jesus took bread and said, *"this is my body."* Chapter six is explicitly Eucharistic. The people had a difficult time believing what Jesus was telling them. However, Jesus did not back down from this statement. Jesus meant what he said. This is not symbolic language or a figment of speech. In fact, Jesus continues and becomes more explicit.

Let me quote the Gospel so that Jesus' words may make the point. *"Jesus said to them, 'Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him'."* Jesus does not back down from his initial statements. In a manner of speaking, Jesus turns up the heat. He is very explicit.

Because these words of Jesus are hard to hear and believe, many people over the years have tried to explain them away. As noted in a previous column, many of our protestant brothers and sisters say that Jesus was speaking figuratively. But then again, how does Jesus indicate that he is speaking figuratively. Was Jesus speaking figuratively when he raised Lazarus from the dead: *"Lazarus, come out"*? Or when Jesus told the dead girl while grasping her hand, *"Little girl arise."* Or again, to the repentant criminal at the crucifixion, *"Today you will be with me in paradise."* Was Jesus speaking figuratively in those miracles? Are the miracles real?

The major theological point in John's Gospel is proclaimed at the beginning of the Gospel. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race, the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."* John 1: 1-5.

Jesus Christ is the Word through whom all things came to be. With the Father and the Holy Spirit, the second person of the Holy Trinity is the Word through all things came to be. He has authority over all creation. If Jesus says it is, so it is! If Jesus takes bread and says this is my body, then so it is. If Jesus takes a cup of wine and says this is my blood, then so it is. The little girl is not dead, and so she arises. The repentant thief is promised paradise and so it is. Jesus is the authority. His word has power. And as we read in the above quote, his word gives life.

There was a lot of murmuring among the crowd about the words of Jesus. They are difficult words. However, we are to believe in him. Jesus did not ask the people, and for that matter all of us, to understand. He asks for faith. We are to trust the Word of God: Jesus Christ. If we are serious about our Christian faith our belief in the Eucharist as the Body and Blood of Christ is not the hardest thing. There are other teachings of Jesus that are difficult to accept.

For instance, deny yourself and take up your cross and follow me. To the rich young man, he told him to sell all that he had, give to the poor and follow me. Yikes! Or, even if you look at a woman with lust, you have already committed adultery with

her in your heart. Hmmm. Or you shall not kill, but Jesus tells us that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgement. This doesn't even consider those Christians who justify abortion, euthanasia, or physician assisted suicide. Or again, love your enemies.

Jesus has many hard sayings and expectations for his followers. His teaching about the Bread of Life is an easy target for disregarding Jesus' authority and teachings. If Jesus can be negated over His words about the Bread of Life, then it becomes easier to ignore his other teachings that are particularly difficult: love your enemies, take up your cross, and so forth. Jesus teaches a way of life for the disciple. That in itself is a huge challenge. They can be exceptionally difficult. They become particularly difficult if we do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ. Without love it becomes impossible to trust in Jesus and his words. The starting point for our relationship with Jesus the awareness that Jesus (God) has loved us first. Our response is love and faith. The faithful love of God is perfectly revealed in the person of Jesus Christ and the gift of himself until the end of time: the Eucharist.

Have a great week.  
Fr. Ralko

## This week we pray Week IV of the Liturgy of the Hours.

### Church Support

August 8, 2021

OFFERTORY	\$8,253.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$4,689.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	\$(890.00)
Other Income	\$1,855.00
	\$(2,171.00)

**May God bless you for supporting your parish!**

#### The Catholic Schools of Zanesville

Our School Lunch Summer program is open from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. every Wednesday. This program is Free and open to all students 18 and under. Drive up and go style lunches.

**RCIA** (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) begins September 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. and is open to anyone who desires to learn more about the Catholic faith. All are welcome to attend the Sessions, including current Catholics seeking to deepen their faith. Please contact Patty at pboggs@st.nickparish.org or call (740) 453-0597 ext. 14 to pre-register or for more information.

I wanted to lift up two Bishop Fenwick eighth graders who will be helping with the Masses. Jackie Connell will be working on joining the cantors and Nathan Hustey has been shadowing Jonathan and will soon be working his way onto the organ bench. Sr. Bernadette and I are grateful for these opportunities to "pass the torch." - Jonathan



### 2021 CAPITAL PRIZE WINNERS

\$5000- Lilly Sidwell

\$100- Peggy Hill, Michael Glaub, Barbara Shank, Gayle Morgan, Tim McAvoy, Chase McDonald, Jeff Kosco, Sam Palleschi, Connie Wilson-Moore and Arlena Dunkle



### **Real Presence, Real Future reflections: May It Be Done Pamela Harris, Resurrection Parish & RPRF Commission Member**

Our beautiful Blessed Mother's fiat at the Annunciation was a free response to cooperate in God's plan for the salvation of souls. The Catechism tells us that faith is not an isolated act, it takes collaboration among believers. "We receive faith from others and should hand it on to others (CCC166)." Our Lady in Heaven, a sign of hope and trust for the Christian community, encourages us to "be not afraid" and imitate this model of faith by our words and deeds. May the collaborative efforts of the faithful of the diocese in proclaiming the real presence of Christ reflect the holiness of the Church.

For more about growing together in the life of faith and discipleship in the Diocese of Columbus, visit [www.RealPresenceRealFuture.org](http://www.RealPresenceRealFuture.org).

**REAL PRESENCE REAL FUTURE GATHERING:** August 27 and 28 will bring together the faithful of the diocese for an opportunity to have an encounter with Christ and one another. In faith, hope and charity, we rejoice in the real presence of Christ, and we rejoice in our relationship with the Lord. On Friday, August 27, we invite you to join us via livestream for a beautiful prayer service that will include a Eucharistic Procession, at St. Joseph Cathedral. On Saturday, August 28, join us on site at St. Charles Preparatory School, for Confession, praise and worship, Mass and inspiring talks by Bishop Brennan and Archbishop Perez. Christ promised to be with us always and it is fulfilled in His mystical presence among us and in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Jesus' commission to the disciples is the same message for us, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...behold, I am with you always." (Mt. 28:19-20). Please note: Friday's event is by invitation only due to the Cathedral capacity, but you are encouraged to watch via the live stream. Online registration for Saturday closes end of business Friday, August 20th. <https://realpresencerealfuture.org/>

#### **Retrouvaille is a Lifeline for Troubled Marriages**

Retrouvaille means "rediscovery." The RETROUVAILLE program offers couples the chance to rediscover themselves, their spouse, and a loving relationship in their marriage. This program is designed to help heal and renew couples who are drifting or who have drifted apart. It consists of one weekend, plus six follow-up sessions. The next in-person weekend is September 10-12, 2021 in Cincinnati. Register at [helpourmarriage.org](http://helpourmarriage.org) or call: 513-922-6045.

# THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

**PARISH LIBRARY:** The parish office is home to many “good reads”. Parishioners may borrow books throughout the year. Can’t find what you are looking for anywhere else? Maybe we have it in our library. The library is open Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Friday’s from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Other times by appointment. If you love to organize, our library needs you.

## ELECTRONIC CONTRIBUTIONS

St. Nicholas Church has a convenient way to make your regular offerings. With our electronic giving program, you can easily set up a recurring giving schedule. If you are currently giving on a weekly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 checks a year or prepare 52 envelopes. Even when something prevents you from attending services, our church will continue to receive your contributions on an uninterrupted basis. To become an electronic giver, call or visit the church office or our website: stnickparish.org.

*Our thoughts and prayers remain with those serving our country currently and with their loved ones at home. We pray for a safe homecoming and that the world may one day be at peace.*

**PLEASE REMEMBER ST. NICHOLAS PARISH IN YOUR WILL. CALL THE PARISH OFFICE AT 453-0597 FOR MORE DETAILS.**

*Please join us each Monday at the St. Nicholas Parish Office Chapel at 2:00 p.m. as we gather to pray the Rosary asking Our Lady’s Intercession or the many needs of our nation, community, and parish.*

## *What’s Happening in Our Parish*

### MONDAY, August 16, St. Stephen of Hungary

8:00 a.m., Mass: Sandy Young, Church

### TUESDAY, August 17

9:00 a.m., Mass: St. Thomas Intention, Church

10:00 a.m., Tuesday Morning Bible Study, Parish Office Upper Level

### WEDNESDAY, August 18

9:00 a.m., Mass: Reg and Sue Grear, anniversary, Church

### THURSDAY, August 19, St. John Eudes

8:00 a.m., Mass: St. Thomas Intention, Church

7:00 p.m., Adult Children of Alcoholics Support Meeting, Church basement

### FRIDAY, August 20, St. Bernard

8:00 a.m., Mass: Mary Lou Staker, Church

## **21<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

### SATURDAY, August 21, St. Pius X

4:15 p.m. p.m.-4:45 p.m., Confessions, Church

5:15 p.m., Mass: Shane Noll, Church

### SUNDAY, August 22

8:15 a.m., Mass: St. Nicholas Parishioners, Church

10:45 a.m., Mass: Shirley Knox, Church

## *Readings for Week of August 16*

Monday	Jgs 2:21-19	Mt 19:16-22
Tuesday	Jgs 6:11-24a	Mt 19:23-30
Wednesday	Jgs 9:6-15	Mt 20:1-16
Thursday	Jgs 11:29-39a	Mt 22:1-14
Friday	Ru 1:1, 3-6, 14b-16, 22	Mt 22:34-40
Saturday	Ru 2:1-3, 8-11; 4:13-17	Mt 23:1-12
Sunday	Jos 24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b	Jn 6:60-69

## LITURGICAL MINISTERS SCHEDULE – August 21 & 22, 2021 – 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

	CANTORS	LECTORS	EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS
<b>Saturday, August 21</b> 5:15 p.m.	Laura DeCoy	Tom Pitcock	Coord: Laurie Harmon Margaret Kronenbitter, Josh Wright
<b>Sunday, August 22</b> 8:15 a.m.	Janet Moses	Bill Sullivan	Coord: Cheryl Sylvester Scott Peterson, Daniel Sylvester
<b>Sunday, August 22</b> 10:45 a.m.	Kevin McCarthy	Bernard Budde	Coord: Tim Hoffer Gerald Tiberio. Claire Tiberio
<b>(Please arrange a substitute if you are unavailable for your scheduled time)</b>			