

DEVOTION OF THE MONTH



AUGUST Month of the Immaculate Heart

The Church dedicates the month of August to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It is a dogma of the Catholic faith that Mary is the Immaculate Conception; that is, in preparation for the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity in her womb, she was conceived without the corruption of sin through the foreseen and infinite merits of her Son, Jesus Christ.

Over the centuries, as saints and theologians reflected on how Mary pondered and treasured the sacred events from the life of Christ in her holy heart, as attested in Scripture, her pure heart was recognized as something to be imitated. Devotion to Our Lady's purity of heart began to flower so much so that in the 17th century, St. John Eudes promoted it alongside the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The devotion rose to a new level after the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima, when Mary revealed an image of her Immaculate Heart to Lucia, Jacinta, and Francisco.

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is defined as a Marian dogma within the Catholic Church. Contemplating this great Mystery has the power to kindle within us the hope of our own salvation.

When we consider the Assumption, we see the great and eternal love shared between the Blessed Mother and her Holy Son. We ourselves are drawn into the story as well, since we, too, have the hope of glorious unity with Christ in heaven.

The Mystery of the Assumption can only be understood in relation to Our Lord's ascension. Only through Christ's ascent into heaven can Mary—or any of us—hope to enter the fullness of heavenly Glory.

We must remember that Mary's Assumption, like her entire life, leads us to contemplate the glory and generosity of God. The Assumption did not happen because of Mary's supreme power; it happened because of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension. It happened because of the Love Christ has for His Mother.

The physical realities of the two events are the same: Mary and Jesus are both in heaven where their souls are united with their bodies. But the spiritual realities of how this came to be are quite different. Consider the names of the two mysteries: the Ascension and the Assumption.

Christ ascended. He did so under his own power as God-made-man, with the glorified body that He had already received by the merits of His victory over death. Mary, on the other hand, was granted a special privilege by her Son. She was assumed by God. It is fitting that she who did not know sin would not know the bodily corruption that follows death—yet it is only by the grace of Jesus that her body was brought to heaven, not her own power.

Now in heaven, Mary continues to intercede for us to her Son, and her intercession is all the more effective due to her ascension.

The unity of body and soul in heaven is not a grace that is only for Mary. Rather in her Assumption the Blessed Mother is the simply the first Christian to enjoy that grace.

This should not surprise us. Mary was the first to hear the Good News of the Savior's imminent arrival, and the first to meet Him when He arrived. She was there at Cana when He began to reveal Himself to the world, and she was there when He was exalted on the Cross.

As always, Mary shows us the way to Her Son. She becomes the first human person to realize the historical destiny of the faithful as members of Christ's Mystical Body, beyond time, beyond death, and beyond judgment. Mary indeed participates in the glory of her Son. Not only is she in heaven, body and soul—united with Him—she also reigns over creation with Him.

CHURCH REOPENING

As of now there is nothing new to report. Weekend Masses have been going smoothly. Our ushers have been essential to this working so well.

For safety's sake, as well as fitting the maximum number of people in the church possible under current restrictions, all must be seated by the ushers. The ushers are present at least 30 minutes prior to the start of Mass to assist you. Please note that once we have reached capacity we cannot let you in the building. As more and more people begin to return to Mass, you may find that arriving 5 minutes prior to the scheduled start of Mass is not early enough. First come, first served.

Just as a reminder:

Those who are sick or vulnerable due to age or health conditions are strongly encouraged to remain at home and view the Mass on television or online.

The dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains in effect indefinitely.

Please continue to consult the parish website (www.steas.org) for updates and changes.

I appreciate your kindness and patience as we try to implement the laws and directives that we must follow from both State government and Diocesan regulation.

“Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections, but instantly set about remedying them, every day begin the task anew.”

— St. Francis de Sales

OFFICE REOPENING

As of July 1, 2020, the office is open to get Mass cards and drop off paperwork and other things during new summer business hours.

Monday - Thursday from 9:30AM to 12:30PM and 1:30PM to 4:00PM.

Outreach will continue to operate on an appointment only basis.

Remember, if you are not yet comfortable being out in public, we have been handling all parish business via phone and email for the past three months and we can accommodate you that way if you wish.

ON RECEIVING COMMUNION

We have just celebrated the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, where by the power of the Holy Spirit and through the hands of the priest, God changes the bread and wine into the Real Presence of Christ. In light of returning to the reception of Holy Communion at public Masses, I present these points about the proper way to receive Holy Communion.

- We are supposed to observe a one-hour Eucharistic fast. This means that we do not eat or drink anything except water or medicine for one hour before receiving Holy Communion. There should be no gum chewing; we should get rid of gum before we enter church. Also, coffee cups and the like, other drinking containers, and other items of the sort are not appropriate to bring into church.
- If you are receiving the Body of Christ in the hand, one hand is to be underneath the other, with both hands flat (not curled up) and hands up held up high. There is to be no grabbing of the Host. Hands must be washed, clean, and sanitized. Gloves are not to be worn.
- If you have received the Body of Christ in the hand, with your right hand **immediately** place the Host in your mouth; do not begin to walk away with it. Proper reverence for the Sacred Species demands that it be consumed **immediately** and not carried around. We do not bless ourselves with the Host or any other act of personal devotion. While I am sure well intentioned, this is a sacrilege. It goes **immediately** into your mouth. In addition, if you see someone walking around with a Host, say something.
- Holy Communion is not a “take-home” and it is not to be kept on your person or brought back to the pew or worse brought outside and left on the windshield of a car (yes, this has happened). If you see this, say something.
- If you are receiving the Body of Christ on the tongue, you must tilt your head back slightly, open your mouth and stick out your tongue, and close your eyes. Do not expect the minister to have to maneuver to place the Host in your mouth - please stick out your tongue. Also, let the minister place the Host on your tongue; do not bite it or grab it with your lips. Do not move your head - you should not be a moving target.

I write these as a reminder and in some cases an instruction on the proper and reverent way to receive Holy Communion.

"Let every knee bend before Thee, O greatness of my God, so supremely humbled in the Sacred Host. May every heart love Thee, every spirit adore Thee and every will be subject to Thee!"

— St. Margaret Mary

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Taken from *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin Mary* by Saint Alphonsus Liguori. Published by Tan Books.

PRAYER TO END THE PANDEMIC

Holy Virgin of Guadalupe, Queen of the Angels and Mother of the Americas, we fly to you today as your beloved children. We ask you to intercede for us with your Son, as you did at the wedding in Cana.

Pray for us, loving Mother, and gain for our nation and world, and for all our families and loved ones, the protection of your holy angels, that we may be spared the worst of this illness. For those already afflicted, we ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance. Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful, wipe away their tears and help them to trust. In this time of trial and testing, teach all of us in the Church to love one another and to be patient and kind. Help us to bring the peace of Jesus to our land and to our hearts.

We come to you with confidence, knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother, health of the sick and cause of our joy. Shelter us under the mantle of your protection, keep us in the embrace of your arms, help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

ANOTHER PRAYER FOR DURING THE PANDEMIC

O clement, O loving, O sweet Mother Mary, we, your children of every nation, turn to you in this pandemic. Our troubles are numerous; our fears are great. Grant that we might deposit them at your feet, take refuge in your Immaculate Heart, and obtain peace, healing, rescue, and timely help in all our needs. You are our Mother. Pray for us to your Son. Amen.

