

Volunteerism - Stewardship



Julie is anxiously waiting for more disciples to come forward to help Blessed Sacrament Church remain wonderful. Julie would love to hear from you regarding helping with Soup 'N More, CUH, Mass Ministries, etc. Actually, any form of volunteering. You do not get graded on your abilities just thanked immensely. Please reach out to Julie in the parish office at 701.282.3321 if you wish to get involved or have any questions.

In case you didn't know.... Sign up boards are in the social hall through the double doors marked Agora. Walk in and they are directly on the left. No experience necessary. Just need to write your name and show up accordingly. Thank you!

Reflections by Fr. Gary Luiten



The Solemnity of the Ascension - May 21, 2023

I sometimes wonder what we would do if we were in the position of the apostles, watching Jesus ascend into Heaven. Would we be sad at Jesus' departure, or rather would we be looking ahead, anticipating the sending of the Holy Spirit and Jesus' coming again? It seems that it is part of our fallen human nature to center on the negative. All one has to do is look at the news. There are very few positive stories. Sometimes we may even see the sacraments in a negative light, something that we have to do, like the sacrament of reconciliation.

But the wonderful truth is that through the Ascension of Jesus we now can receive the Holy Spirit. So yes, our Lord's Ascension is a great occasion! And that is the positive side of this day. The two angels reminded the apostles of how positive a faith we do have, and how it is worth proclaiming and preaching.

It is interesting to note, too, that on this day of the Ascension, in both the first reading and in the gospel reading we are reminded not of the last Sacrament, but of the first Sacrament, the sacrament of baptism! The Ascension really signifies a new beginning for us Christians as we set out on a deeper relationship with our God and with His Church.

And so, may God give us the grace to see not how bad life can be, but how good life can be when we

live in the grace of the Holy Spirit and receive the Sacraments faithfully, when we concentrate on the positive, on the truths of our faith. When we think of the ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit, we can be renewed with a sense of meaning in our lives, realizing that God has a mission for us, too, to go out and proclaim to everyone the Good News of salvation by what we say and do and by the way we live our lives.

I usually have another item or two on the first bulletin of the month, but since I received the official word just this past week from the bishop, I would like to let you know now. Every seven years we priests are eligible for a sabbatical. I have never taken one, and after thirty years in the priesthood, you could say it is long overdue! A sabbatical is a time for the priest to get renewed in the faith and in his ministry as a priest. I also wanted to let you know this before some of you leave for the lakes for the summer. Beginning September 1, I will begin a three-month sabbatical at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, Maryland. This is near where I went to seminary for theology in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

For many years I have thought of taking a sabbatical, but things just never seemed to work out. For one thing, Mom was still alive, and she would have been crushed to be without me for three months! Now things seem to be falling into place. Mom has since gone to her eternal reward and also, I have a priest who is willing and able to take the Masses, funerals, and emergencies for me. It will be my housemate, Father Tom [Feltman](#). Most of you probably know him from taking a Mass here every now and then.

I will be auditing some seminary classes, taking spiritual direction, and offering daily Mass when I am gone. I also plan on visiting classmates from my seminary days from over thirty years ago. I plan on returning the weekend of December 3 for the first Sunday of Advent. And so, when those of you return from the lakes in the Fall, don't be surprised if you see someone at the altar who is not me! I will keep you all in my daily prayers during my time away.

Mission Statement:

As loving disciples, we the faith community of Blessed Sacrament, strive for full and active participation in joyfully serving Christ while recognizing the gifts and dignity of all.