

## For The Bulletin Of June 24, 2020



### THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION

#### *From Father Robert*

The ascension of the Lord before His disciples is depicted graphically in the Acts of the Apostles, when Jesus is said to ascend physically into the sky, being taken away from their sight by a cloud. But our gospel reading today comes not from Acts since it is not a gospel, nor from Luke the author of Acts, but from the conclusion of the Gospel of Matthew. In this story, the last four verses of the gospel, there is no ascension. Instead, the eleven disciples (a reminder of Judas' absence) meet at the rendezvous point that had been relayed to them by the women in Jerusalem. The eleven, according to the Gospel of Matthew, now see the risen Lord for the first time; and the evangelist is not clear as to how long after Easter this episode in Galilee took place. The story is sometimes called the "Commissioning of the Disciples," or "The Great Commission," for Jesus commissions the disciples to spread

the good news. But it is not called "The Ascension."

So, on this Feast of the Ascension, we hear about the risen Lord commissioning His disciples to go out to all nations, making disciples, teaching, and baptizing them. Prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus, discipleship (again according to the Gospel of Matthew) was limited to the twelve. Now, after the resurrection, all nations, all peoples are invited into discipleship. The Gentile mission prefigured by the magi visiting the child Jesus now comes to fruition. Now that Jesus has been raised from the dead, there is no limitation on who may be a disciple.

In the Acts of the Apostles, the ascension serves as the final leave-taking of Jesus before His assembled disciples. In Matthew, the commissioning of the disciples serves the same function. As the gospel concludes, there is no further appearance of the risen Lord. Matthew has not written his own version of the Acts of the Apostles. As a result, this appearance is the first and final one. Even though there is no physically graphic ascension into the clouds, this is the ultimate, in the sense of last, appearance of the risen Lord to His disciples. And despite this last appearance, Jesus promises that He is with them. Earlier in the gospel Jesus spoke about how judgment will be based on how we treat the one who hungers or the one who thirsts, for in each encounter we see Jesus. When we serve the poor, we serve Jesus. When we neglect the poor, we neglect Jesus. Jesus is present among us always in the poor and lowly of the world. That is His promise.



### ***Living The Paschal Mystery***

The ascension is depicted so graphically in the Acts of the Apostles that many of us read Matthew's story with Acts in the background. But the story of the ascension is not so much about Jesus magically rising into the air and being taken away by clouds, as it is about the last time He was seen by His disciples. Theologically, the important aspect is what He says, not how He leaves. In the Gospel of Matthew, He commissions the disciples to evangelize, to tell the good news, making disciples on their way by baptizing. In the Gospel of Matthew, this message is so significant that Matthew does not even narrate an ascension! For us, we are reminded that to live the paschal mystery is to die, to rise, and go with Christ. We, like the disciples, are sent on mission – to live the gospel values that Jesus incarnated, to teach all nations, to make disciples. May our lives of service and sacrifice for others be such a witness that others are drawn to Him. For then we may be assured that we are living the paschal mystery.

This next-to-last Sunday of the Easter Season continues to challenge us as to how we are living our Easter faith. Here are some thoughts and questions for your further reflection and meditation:

In the Acts of the Apostles, the disciples are shaken from their reverie by two men in white garments asking, "Why are you standing there looking at the sky?" Where

in your life do you feel God calling you from contemplation into action?

In his letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul prays that his readers will be given "a Spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of God." Throughout your life how has your understanding and knowledge of God grown or changed?

In the gospel, despite all they have witnessed and experienced, the disciples "doubted." How do you deal with doubt in the life of faith?

How does our faith community carry on the great commission that Jesus gave the first apostles to "make disciples of all nations" through baptism and teaching?





### ***About Liturgy***

In each Lectionary year, we hear today's reading from the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles on Ascension. In Cycle A, however, we might perceive echoes from the Third Sunday of Easter's gospel of the disciples on the Road to Emmaus. In both, the Risen Christ disappears from the disciples' sight and the witnesses return to Jerusalem. In both, this is where the true work of the church begins. Christ's presence is no longer confined to Jesus' body but is now embodied by an entire community, sent to be His presence in the world.

We are disciples in that long line of women and men whose ancestors in faith came from those followers of Christ on the road and in that upper room. In some way, at every Eucharist, we, too, are witnesses to the "absence" of Christ that reveals His ultimate and complete presence. In a sermon on the ascension, St. Leo the Great said it this way, "What was visible in our Savior has passed over into His mysteries," that is, into the sacraments that we celebrate.

We have a choice every time we gather for Holy Eucharist. We can stay, looking up at the sky, looking for Christ. Or, having been nourished by Word and Sacrament, we can go out, sent to announce the gospel of the Lord, and be His presence to those in need.

That is when the real story of ascension begins.



### **Origin And Birthplace Of Memorial Day**

On May 5, 1868, the Grand Army of the Republic established Memorial Day or Decoration Day as the national day to decorate the graves of the Civil War soldiers with flowers. Major General John A. Logan appointed May 30 as the day to be observed. Arlington National Cemetery had the first observance of the day on a grand scale. The place was appropriate as it already housed graves of over 20,000 Union dead and several hundred Confederate dead. Gen. and Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant presided the meeting and the center point of these Memorial Day ceremonies was the mourning-draped veranda of the Arlington mansion. Speeches were followed by a march of soldiers' children and orphans and members of the GAR through the cemetery strewing flowers on both Union and Confederate graves. They also recited prayers and sang hymns for the dead.

Even before this declaration, local observances for these war dead were being held at various places. In Columbus, Miss., a group of women visited a cemetery on April 25 1866, to decorate the graves of Confederate soldiers and the Union soldiers who fell at the battle of Shiloh. Many cities in the North and the South claim to be the first to celebrate Memorial Day in 1866 but Congress and President Lyndon Johnson officially declared Waterloo in New York as

the 'birthplace' of Memorial Day in 1966. It was said that on May 5, 1866, a ceremony was held here to honor local soldiers and sailors who fought in the Civil War, businesses were closed for the day and residents furling flags at half-mast. It was said to be the first formal, community-wide and regular event.

In 1971, Memorial Day was declared a national holiday by the Congress, who designated the last Monday in May as the day for its observance.



### ***Ways To Observe Memorial Day***

Memorial Day reminds us of our duties towards the wounded soldiers and the bereaved families, orphans and widows of the dead soldiers. We should honor the dead by adorning their sacred remains with flowers and garlands and show our gratitude towards them in the following ways:

- Adorning the graves of the soldiers with flags or flowers.
- Visiting cemeteries and memorials.
- Furling the American Flag at half-mast until noon.
- Furling the 'POW/MIA Flag'.
- Keep silence for a minute at 3 p.m., 'National Moment of Remembrance' and listen to Taps being played.
- Take a pledge to aid the disabled veterans, widows, widowers and orphans of the dead and keep it.

- Offering thanks to the veterans and appreciating the ultimate sacrifices of the soldiers to the bereaved families personally may help too.

## **American Catholics, meet the Communion service**

May 15, 2020

by [Thomas Reese](#), [Religion News Service](#)



A priest offers Holy Communion.

The requirement to practice social distancing means that many more U.S. Catholics are going to attend a Communion service on Sunday rather than a Mass. Many Catholics will not notice the difference or may even prefer the Communion service.

- When churches begin opening, social distancing will allow fewer people to attend Mass at the same time, which means more services will be required. Granted the scarcity of Catholic priests, and their average age, there will not be enough priests with sufficient stamina to do all these services. Therefore, some of the

services will not be Masses but Communion services.

- A Communion service looks very much like a Mass but is presided over by a deacon or layperson rather than a priest, because it does not have a moment of consecration, which only the priest can perform. At a Communion service, you will not hear the words, "This is my body. ... This is my blood. ... " Instead, the deacon or layperson distributes hosts that have been consecrated at a Mass, then stored in the tabernacle until needed.
- Communion services are very common in areas where there are few priests. Even in the U.S., Communion services may occur on Sundays and weekdays in rural and mountain states such as [Idaho](#), where there is a shortage of priests and Catholics are widely dispersed.
- In rural areas, a priest might be responsible for several widely dispersed parishes that he visits once a month. During his visit, he celebrates Mass and fills the tabernacle with enough hosts for the rest of the month. When the priest is absent, a deacon or layperson (man or woman) presides over the Communion service.
- Even in urban areas, a parish with a resident pastor might have a Communion service on a weekday if the priest is sick or away.
- The Communion service begins with a liturgy of the Word that is almost exactly like that at a Mass. Songs are sung, prayers are recited, Scriptures

are read and a sermon is given.

Those paying attention will notice slight differences, such as the absence of references to "sacrifice," because a Communion service is not a sacrifice as the Mass is.

- The noticeable changes begin after the general intercessions (aka prayers of the faithful). There is no presentation of gifts (what Catholics used to call the offertory) nor is there the Eucharistic prayer, which includes the consecration of the gifts. Instead, after the general intercessions, the presider and the community recite the Lord's Prayer, exchange the sign of peace, and then receive Communion. There can be songs at the appropriate times plus a final prayer, blessing and dismissal.
- During the pandemic, of course, the sign of peace must avoid physical contact, and Communion will be administered under strict guidelines to prevent the spread of infection.
- The coronavirus may force U.S. Catholics to experience what has long been a reality for Catholics in parts of the world, like the Amazon, where there are many Catholics and few priests. In these regions, Communion services are very common, although it is difficult to store consecrated hosts for long periods of time in the tropics.
- Preparing the American Catholics for Communion services will not be easy.
- "The faithful should be instructed carefully that, even when they receive communion outside Mass,

they are closely united with the sacrifice which perpetuates the sacrifice of the cross," states the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship in its 1973 document "[Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside of Mass.](#)"

- "They are sharers in the sacred banquet," the document continues, in which "by communion in the body and blood of the Lord the people of God shares in the blessings of the paschal sacrifice."
- On the other hand, the Vatican and the U.S. bishops make clear that a Mass is preferred to a Communion service.
- "Sacramental communion received during Mass is the more perfect participation in the Eucharistic celebration," according to the congregation. "The Eucharistic sign is expressed more clearly when the faithful receive the body of the Lord from the same sacrifice after the communion of the priest."
- "Such celebrations should never be seen as an equal choice with participation at Mass," explains the U.S. bishops' conference [website](#). "Every effort must be undertaken to avoid any confusion between this celebration and the Mass."
- The necessary expansion of Communion services in the United States will likely expose how little understanding there is of the Eucharistic prayer and the difference between a Communion service and a Mass.
- The Eucharistic prayer, which comes between the presentation of gifts and the Lord's Prayer, includes not only the institutional narrative (the story of the Last Supper) but also prayers of praise, thanksgiving and offering. It also asks that those receiving Communion be transformed by the Spirit into the body of Christ.
- Many Catholics may not even notice its absence at Communion services. Most consider it the priest's prayer whose only purpose is to consecrate the bread and wine. Few will be disappointed by its absence; many might even be happy that its absence shortens the time for the service.
- The fact that many priests prefer the shortest Eucharistic prayer (there are 12 from which to choose), recite it as fast as possible, even continuing to recite it as the people obscure his words as they drop to their knees after the Sanctus ("Holy, holy"), has not helped.
- Since most bishops and priests have not spent any time explaining the Eucharistic prayer to their people, they should not be surprised if the people don't grasp the difference between a Mass and a Communion service. Many parishioners who attend a Communion service presided over by a nun refer to it as "sister's Mass," to the horror of the bishops. If the nun or layperson preaches and prays more fervently than they are used to from a priest, many parishioners will prefer that "Mass" to Father's.

- On the positive side, the expansion of Communion services will contribute to declericalization of the church. It will also allow parishioners to see how well or badly laypeople can preside at liturgical ceremonies. If married men and women do just as well as the priests, we will see a growing groundswell for ordaining them.
- The bishops will not want to expand the number of Communion services, but COVID-19 gives them little choice.

*[Jesuit Fr. Thomas Reese is a columnist for Religion News Service and author of Inside the Vatican: The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church.]*

## Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation

*From the Center for Action and Contemplation*



*Week Twenty*

## Franciscan Ecological Wisdom

### **Our Common Planetary Home**

Sunday, May 17, 2020

*To mark the fifth anniversary of his encyclical Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home, Pope Francis has declared May 16–24 "Laudato Si' Week." [1] The Daily Meditations this week will focus on how Franciscan spirituality impels us to act in response to "the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor." I must admit that I am often discouraged by the minimal efforts most Christians are willing to make to care for the earth, even at this critical juncture. The pandemic has shown our willingness to make sacrifices—at least to some degree—to protect our fellow humans, but we have not shown that same willingness to make even small changes to protect or heal the earth. I hope that will change!*

*Father Joshrom Isaac Kureethadam, a theologian who has studied and written extensively about Laudato Si', urges us to heed the warnings of both science and our conscience:*

Today, our common planetary home is falling into ruin. We are on the brink of an unprecedented global challenge regarding the sustainability of our common home, which places a question mark on the future of human civilization. . . .

In the second chapter of the Gospel of John, there is a verse that the disciples attribute to Jesus as he drives out money lenders and sellers of sheep and cattle from the temple of Jerusalem: "Zeal for your house will consume me" [John 2:17]. Prior to that verse Jesus tells those who are despoiling the holy place: "Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" [John 2:16]. . . .

Today, we could, and probably we should, understand this house as our common planetary home. It is this common home which is being despoiled and desecrated today. Significantly, our common home is also God's own house, permeated by the Spirit of God from the dawn of creation, where the Son of God pitched his tent in the supreme event of the incarnation. It is in this common home that God co-dwells with humanity and of which we have been entrusted with stewardship, as we read in the book of Genesis [2:15]. The contemporary ecological crisis, in fact, lays bare precisely our incapacity to perceive the physical world as impregnated with divine presence. We have swapped the lofty vision of the physical world as God's own abode, sanctified by the incarnation of the Son of God, with the one-dimensional mechanistic outlook of modernity. Accordingly, the physical world gets reduced to a mere storehouse of resources for human consumption, just real estate for market speculation. . . . Through pollution of the planet's land, air, and waters, we have degraded our common home that is also God's own home. We have turned this sacred abode into a marketplace.

In a situation of planetary emergency like the collapse of our planetary abode, we need to be aflame once again with the zeal for our common home.

**Gateway to Action & Contemplation:**

*What word or phrase resonates with or challenges me? What sensations do I notice in my body? What is mine to do?*

**Prayer for Our Community:**

*O Great Love, thank you for living and loving in us and through us. May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings. Help us become a community that vulnerably shares each other's burdens*

*and the weight of glory. Listen to our hearts' longings for the healing of our world.*

*[Please add your own intentions.] . . .*

*Knowing you are hearing us better than we are speaking, we offer these prayers in all the holy names of God, amen.*

## Archbishop refers dioceses to resources on public Mass, sacraments

May 18, 2020

by [Dennis Sadowski](#), [Catholic News Service](#)



Archbishop Leonard P. Blair of Hartford, Conn., chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Divine Worship, gives the homily as he concelebrates Mass with other U.S. bishops at the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome Nov. 4, 2019. He sent a memo May 14, 2020, to fellow bishops offering links to resources for parishes to review as they prepare to offer the public celebration of Mass and the sacraments. (CNS/Paul Haring)

**CLEVELAND** — The chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Divine Worship has sent a memo to fellow bishops offering links to resources for parishes to review as they prepare to offer the public celebration of Mass and the sacraments.

The May 14 memo from Archbishop Leonard P. Blair of Hartford, Connecticut, references resources from the Thomistic Institute, the Catholic Medical Association and the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions.

The archbishop's latest correspondence follows an April 30 memo in which he suggested bishops consider guidelines developed by a working group at the Thomistic Institute at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington.

He told the bishops the purpose of sharing the first two resources "is primarily medical in nature."

"As we proceed in a manner that respects the matter and form of the sacraments and liturgical norms, these guidelines specify the medical considerations that need to be taken into account, even as there is disagreement on some points of a prudential nature," he wrote in the memo.

The third resource offers liturgical issues for consideration by parish and diocesan planners.

The Thomistic Institute and Catholic Medical Association documents review the need for social distancing in pews, requirements that Massgoers wear facial protection, ensuring the protection of priests, deacons and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, and the safe distribution of holy Communion.

Safe practices are necessary, according to all three sources, as bishops face having to balance public safety while maintaining the respect and reverence of the Eucharist and the liturgical and sacramental symbolism of Mass rites.

The nine-page Catholic Medical Association resource, developed by its Ad Hoc Committee of Catholic Doctors, reviews much of the guidance offered by public health officials designed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the illness caused by the novel coronavirus.

"Safest practices should be created with input from medical experts," the association's resource said. "These practices will likely evolve as the pandemic unfolds, and will vary based on ongoing local, regional and national risk assessments." The 12-page offering from the FDLC offers lists of issues to consider as parishes prepare to reopen for public worship.

It opens with a list of general considerations, noting that "the common good is our priority."

In subsequent pages it offers practical steps to ensure safety and hygiene, including the use and disposal of holy water, regular cleaning of vestments, keeping church decorations in line with the season but also to a minimum, and sanitizing high-touch areas after each liturgy.

Other considerations are offered under the titles of social distancing, guidelines for the first Sunday of reopening and liturgical considerations. It also has links to various public health organizations that can offer guidance for parishes to follow to ensure worshippers' safety.

The Thomistic Institute's Working Group on Infectious Protocols for Sacraments and Pastoral Care April 28 released guidance on a wide list of practices that would maintain the integrity of liturgy and the distribution of Communion. It has been referenced twice by Blair.

The archbishop cited one particular point that has been raised by some medical professionals regarding the use of cotton balls to administer the chrism oil in the sacrament of confirmation. The archbishop said the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat of Divine Worship "expressed some serious reservations" about the practice, referring the doctrinal question to the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship.

The congregation, the memo said, "replied that a dubium submitted ... would be appropriate so that the question can be studied and an authoritative answer given. A dubium is therefore being sent to Rome." "The Secretary of the Congregation, Archbishop (Arthur) Roche, advised great prudence and caution in the celebration of the sacraments under the present circumstances," the memo said.



May 19, 2020

#### Notice During the Covid-19 Outbreak

In solidarity, we at the Interfaith Peace Project stand together in these times of heart break and upset. Some of you may have lost friends or family members. Some of you may have lost your job and your income; some may be working overtime to help with the crisis. Some of you may be home and alone and some may be trying to figure out a new way to live. Please let us know how we can help. If you would like a phone appointment with any of us, give us a call. You may call or email Tom at:

Tom Bonacci  
peace@thomaspbonacci.net  
925-787- 9279



© bernardojbp [stock.adobe.com](https://stock.adobe.com)

**A REFLECTION FROM THE  
CHRISTIAN TRADITION**  
"A Reflection for These Final Days  
of Easter:  
My Sheep Know My Voice"  
By Thomas P. Bonacci, C.P.

One of the most beautiful and powerful images of the Easter season is the Good Shepherd (John 10). In those lovely verses, the Gospel writer presents an image of Jesus that has inspired artists, poets, and farmers throughout the centuries. Jesus is portrayed as an endearing Shepherd who "loves" the sheep placed under his care. One wonders if Jesus possessed any practical business skills. The farming endeavors are not situations where one adopts the inventory as pets. For too long, the imagery of the Good Shepherd has been romanticized as if Jesus was simply displaying what it means to be meek and mild. The text and its fierce imagery must be retrieved since the

implied teaching is crucial to our following of Jesus.

We must resist the temptation to think that we are the sheep in the flock of Jesus. We are called to be like the Good Shepherd in the flock of our neighbors, friends, families, and associates. We are invited to hear the voice of others and call them by name. In this day and age, when powerful people think they gain popularity by calling people names, the teaching and example of Jesus serve as a necessary corrective. How we speak to and about others is, in itself, an act of justice. This does not mean we never correct or confront anyone. Justice demands we stand up for what is right by exemplifying the respect others deserve.

Jesus stuns the industrialization of the farming community in the reversing of crucial roles. Instead of the sheep dying for the profit and well-being of shepherds, the Good Shepherd is willing to die for the sake of the flock.

I cannot help but think of our brothers and sisters in the meatpacking industry. Governmental officials are demanding they risk their lives that we might eat. Suddenly the imagery of John's Good Shepherd is bleeding. These men and women are often struggling to exist, immigrants seeking security, hardworking people who put their families first. They have been called names, demeaned, and marginalized so powerful people can make money at the expense of their slaughter.

We must come to their rescue. We must call them by name. We must

cherish their lives and not devour their flesh by thinking we have no power, no voice, no right to confront. The slogan says we are in this together. We might modify what we eat. We might make sure the weaker among us are secured and assured. We might bond with the management of owners of local grocery stores and outlets to see how we may be of help to the men, women, and children who produce our food. How could we eat and not remember Jesus? And, if we do remember Jesus, how can we ever forget those for whom he died?

We have now come to the realization that essential workers are not necessarily people of status, wealth, or power. They are often hungry, worried, scorned, hurt, and insulted. Thank you for being a Good Shepherd when you shop, consume, and share. Let your voice be heard so those threatened by the greed of the foolish will not be slaughtered on the altar of profit, ego, and indifference. Remember Jesus in every morsel you eat and give thanks with the generous self-giving of yourselves.



On behalf of the Finance Council, I want to thank all those who have consistently sent in your tithes and offerings to support the parish, its programs, ministries, outreaches, and staffing, especially during this time of

corona virus. Please know how much your notes and cards, sent along with your offerings, mean to us to let us know you have not forgotten your parish, just as we have not forgotten you. This has been a reflection of your Stewardship of Treasure, and for many who are feeling the effects of this health crisis financially, it has been a sacrifice to do so. This generosity will not be forgotten. Again, thank you and may God richly bless you for your thoughtfulness and generosity.



We have begun the process to prepare for the reopening of our church for regular, in-person worship. I have asked Vince Augusta to Chair the Reopening Committee and they are presently working their way through sets of documents that will guide us.

Our highest priority is the safety and health of all our parishioners. We are following the guidelines given to us by the CDC, HHS, Federal, State, and Local requirements along with those given by the church. This is a very detailed and complex process that will affect us all for quite a long time. Once we have put our process together, I will share it with you so that you can begin to familiarize yourself with all that will be required of us to return to normal worship. There are certain principles that will continue: the wearing of face masks and gloves; strict following of social distancing as we enter, where we sit, how we process for the

reception of Holy Communion, how we leave the church; the cleaning and disinfecting of all surfaces and spaces; practicing the highest levels of personal hygiene and protection; the washing of hands and the use of hand sanitizer.

We need to have our protocol in place as we have been advised that the reopening of the church could possibly take place within the next few weeks. Please pray for the Committee as they accomplish their work and then be prepared to respect all that is going to be asked of us in order to return to the celebration of the Liturgy and Sacraments.

### ***Diocesan Resources During Covid-19***

In this week's Diocesan Weekly, a communication forum from the Diocese of Oakland included Resources for Families during this pandemic of Covid-19. I share these with you in the hopes that you will find them useful, practical, and enjoyable.

## **RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**



- **For Parents, Teens, Young Adults (and family):**

<https://vencuentro.org/resources-for-ministry-during-covid-19-outbreak/>

This is an EXCELLENT comprehensive

resource with inspiration, activities, enrichment and prayers with something for everyone

### **[www.pastoralcenter.com](http://www.pastoralcenter.com)**

A wide assortment of downloadable resources and activities for growing in faith together as a family

### **[www.Formed.org](http://www.Formed.org)**

Access to over 600 videos, movies and resources from over 50 Catholic contributors. There are movies, short clips and programs for all ages, including many resources for Lent and Holy Week. (This is free if your parish has subscribed or an individual family subscription is \$9.99 per month)

### **[www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)**

Official site of the US Bishops with daily mass readings, prayers, information and links to resources for all ages during the Corona Virus

### **[www.catholicdoors.com](http://www.catholicdoors.com)**

Explore prayer, catholic traditions, learn about patron saints and much more.

### **For Children:**

#### **[www.Catholicicing.com](http://www.Catholicicing.com)**

Activities and resources for families with young children. Currently featuring Lenten activities to engage in at home.

#### **[www.cgsusa.org/discovercgs-approach/cgs-in-the-home-parent-resources/](http://www.cgsusa.org/discovercgs-approach/cgs-in-the-home-parent-resources/)**

Great resource with info and activities for parents of children ages 3-6 years.

### **For Teens:**

#### **[www.lifeteen.com](http://www.lifeteen.com)**

Resources and inspiration including a link to a series of global Life Nights starting this Sunday

#### **[www.youcat.org](http://www.youcat.org)**

Has an app of daily 5 minute faith talk with activities

### ***Justice Corner by Carolyn Krantz, Pastoral Associate***

The epistle today says, "Rejoice to the extent that you share the sufferings of

Christ.” This pandemic journey has truly been a time of sufferings, but also a time of learning about ourselves and the world we live in. As things begin to “let up,” I would like to encourage you to buy a notebook and begin to write down the lessons of this time...the losses, the changes, the wonderment, the sacrifices you have seen and been a part of.

There is a book called *The Human Journey* by Anthony Padovano. It is a reflection on the life and writings of Thomas Merton, the famous Trappist monk and writer. In it Padovano says that writing is a way of touching people without jeopardizing their privacy, but it demands a faithfulness to a contemplative calling. (p.2) In other words, to write well and to touch others, we must be faithful to times of silence.

The pandemic is a severance from our self-indulgence and our efforts to promote our own ego. Every day we see the death toll rise and the service of our nurses and doctors, police and EMT's, continue with graciousness. This challenges us to rethink our way of being in the world. This is what you should journal about. Write words that you can reflect on later. Listen in the silence and hear the inspiration of the Spirit.

Stories enable us to get on with life and see connections beyond the random happening of everyday experience. During the “shelter in place” time, we have experienced the boredom of everyday cooking, cleaning, managing our children, worrying about the future with no answer in sight. We have heard stories of food banks and neighbors celebrating from their driveways. We have witnessed artists calling on us to use our creativity and join them in music, song and dance. Look up the Abbey of the Arts on YouTube for some inspiration. What meaning emerges from the patterns of our

lives in this time? In the series of events that occur day to day, what understanding of life occurs? What patterns do we find in our internal wandering?

Padovano writes about the archetype of journeying that is written in the American way of being. Our ancestors wandered from other parts of the world to the country. After the establishment of the country, people wandered West. The history of California is about people wandering in search of gold and new beginnings. So, write about your wanderings. What have you seen in these past months that challenge you to hear God's call in a new way?

Catholicism offers a response to both God and to one's need to be consistent in oneself. We have just experienced a new Easter, not like any in our awareness. Now we approach the mountain of the ascension and wait for the coming of the Spirit. We have learned how to experience live-stream Eucharist and not to forget the community that is praying with us. Hopefully we have been able to find time to pray more and listen to the God within us. Sometimes we have felt grief and loss. We certainly have felt a sense of wandering in the wilderness of this new time. Like the Israelites of old or the disciples gradually coming to the understanding of what resurrection means, we have struggled to take in these new events and to seek the “Way” we are to go. Scripture says, “It is not yet clear what we shall be, but we shall be like Him.” (1 John 3:2)

The consistency is found in today's Gospel, “Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ.” Each day must begin and end with Him. He is with us always, even to the end of the world.

*Comfort and Joy (Best Of) by Peter Degl'Innocenti, Pastoral Associate*

Every Wednesday morning those who participate in the devotional novena to Our Mother of Perpetual Help are quite familiar with the phrase "...help us comfort the sick and the dying..." It is part of a prayer and definitely part of the open-ended commandment given to us by Jesus to "Love one another as I have loved you." There are many within our parish who suffer from sickness. There are those who are dying from serious diseases, especially cancer. We seem to have had a virtual floodgate of cancer diagnoses amongst the congregation lately. Many of the names listed in the bulletin in the Prayer Chain section have this diagnosis. Some cancers are very slow growing and are easily removed by surgery. Others act so fast; people have only months to live and are making the best of the time they have left. The question is, "How do we know who they all are?" The answer, I believe, is to treat everyone as if we might not see them tomorrow, for indeed we might not.

Eventually we all need comforting. Upon meeting Nathaniel for the first time, Jesus gives him comfort by affirming his status as a true Son of Israel. Giving comfort, recognition, and love to everyone we meet is part of being a follower of Jesus. After all, who are the dying? Aren't we all? In a way, time is the cancer diagnosis we all suffer from. A friend once told me, half-jokingly, "Live long enough...pick your cancer."

Again, a theologian once wrote that although Jesus has freed us from sin and eternal death there is one lingering aspect left over from the fall of Adam and Eve, that is the "curse" of humanity; that we are aware of our own mortality. Animals don't suffer this burden of thought. They have instinctive fears, feel pain, and see other

animals die, but don't anticipate or contemplate their own death. Only we humans carry this load. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to comfort everyone, including ourselves, for as Jesus said, "We know not the day or the hour."

The marvelous part of giving comfort is knowing we are obeying Jesus' command. Knowing that, we hold fast to the promise that goes along with our obedience; eternal life! No one knows more about life than Jesus does. He has consistently told us what true life is all about. He's also told us flatly what life is not about; eating, dressing, worrying, and even I might add...breathing in and out. There is so much more to this gift God has given to us. We will not fully realize it until we are in such a place as to fully exercise it – heaven! Given the human propensity for war, violence, terror, and cruelty the diagnosis for us all is dire, but the prognosis...ahh, the prognosis is wonderful!



# St. Ignatius of Antioch Church Group to France

## **Day 1: Sun Aug 29, 2021**

### **Welcome to Paris**

On arrival at Charles de Gaulle Airport, a group transfer is provided to your hotel. After checking in, the capital's grand boulevards and world-famous landmarks are yours to explore. Join your Travel Director and fellow guests for a Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant.

**Meal: Welcome Dinner with Wine**

**Hotel: Le Meridien Etoile Hotel Paris, 9 nights**

## **Day 2: Mon Aug 30, 2021**

### **Morning at leisure, Churches & the Louvre**

Enjoy a leisurely morning before joining your group in the afternoon for a guided visit with your Local Expert of the Louvre (subject to availability). Walk to nearby Saint-Eustache, one of the most visited churches in Paris distinguished by its dimensions, works of art and its great organ. Continue to La Madeleine, a Roman Catholic Church with the design of a Greek temple. Enjoy the afternoon at your leisure then rejoin your group this evening for a cruise along the Seine river with dinner included (early dinner scheduled at approximately 18:00).

**Meals: Breakfast, Dinner with Wine**

## **Day 3: Tue Aug 31, 2021**

### **Depart for Lourdes**

Pack your overnight bag and depart for the train station this morning for your first class rail journey to Lourdes. After arrival, get settled into your hotel before joining the group for an evening candlelight procession followed by dinner at your hotel.

**Meals: Breakfast, Hotel Dinner with Wine**

**Hotel: Mercure Lourdes, 1 night**

## **Day 4: Wed Sep 1, 2021**

### **Mass and Healing Baths, return Paris**

This morning, view the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes before coming together for mass. Visit the nearby healing baths, inspired by one of the apparitions where Virgin Mary told Bernadette "Go and drink at the spring and wash yourself there!" and has since been a source for renewal and healing for millions of pilgrims. Depart this afternoon on your first class rail journey back to Paris.

**Meal: Breakfast**

**Hotel: Le Meridien Etoile Hotel Paris**

## **Day 5: Thu Sep 2, 2021**

### **Food Market Walking Tour**

Later this morning, join your Local Expert for a walking tour of a popular Parisian market. Sample fresh cheeses and learn some of the best kept secrets of French cuisine during this immersive experience. Join us for dinner tonight at Le Procope, the oldest café in Paris (availability permitting). Le Procope was conceived in 1686 and has had continuous operation since, welcoming prominent writers and intellectuals, this historical café is not to be missed.

**Meals: Breakfast, Dinner with Wine**

## **Day 6: Fri Sep 3, 2021**

### **Eiffel Tower & the Sacred Heart of Paris**

Ascend the Eiffel Tower (subject to availability) for spectacular views of Paris. Continue to the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Paris, commonly known as Sacre Coeur, the second most visited monument in Paris dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

**Meal: Breakfast**

For more information please contact:

Linda Grelli - Sr. Travel Agent  
Black Diamond Travel

Tel: (925) 754-5340 Email: linda@blackdiamondtravel.com

**Day 7: Sat Sep 4, 2021**

**Palace of Versailles**

Tread in the footsteps of French nobility and explore the opulence and splendor of Versailles (subject to availability). Join a Local Expert as you wander through the palace's extraordinary Hall of Mirrors, the Apartments and Battles Gallery. Stroll through the picturesque Royal Gardens and visit the Petit Trianon to see first-hand how the French Royal Family lived in private before discovering Marie Antoinette's Hamlet and the Royal Chapel. Enjoy dinner this evening at a local restaurant.

**Meals: Breakfast, Dinner with Wine**

**Day 8: Sun Sep 5, 2021**

**The D-Day Beaches**

Discover the Normandy region and the D-Day beaches with our Local Expert on this full-day tour. We'll visit the dramatic battle-scarred cliffs of Pointe du Hoc; the American cemetery at Omaha Beach and the almost-intact gun battery at Longues-sur-Mer. You'll also enjoy the superb new Operation Overlord Museum before continuing to Arromanches for views over Gold and Juno Beaches.

**Meal: Breakfast**

**Day 9: Mon Sep 6, 2021**

**Luxembourg Gardens & Churches**

Start your day with your Local Expert with a visit to Luxembourg Gardens, sprawled in front of Luxembourg Palace and conceived in the 17th century. Walk to nearby Saint-Sulpice church, the second largest church in the whole city. Continue to Saint Germain, Paris's oldest church, before visiting the royal chapel of Saint Chapelle, once home to the Kings of France until the 14th century. This evening, join your Travel Director and companions for a memorable Celebration Dinner.

**Meals: Breakfast, Celebration Dinner with Wine**

**Day 10: Tue Sep 7, 2021**

**Au Revoir Paris**

After breakfast, it's time to bid Paris au revoir as you prepare to return home after a memorable break in one of the world's greatest cities. A group transfer is provided to Charles de Gaulle Airport, private transfers available at an additional charge.

**Meal: Breakfast**

**St. Ignatius Church Group to France**

**10 days/9 nights**

Below rates are per person, land only, based on double occupancy with final price determined by traveling group size.

<b>35 - 39</b>	paying guests	<b>\$3,600</b>
<b>30 - 34</b>	paying guests	<b>\$3,700</b>
<b>25 - 29</b>	paying guests	<b>\$3,850</b>
<b>20 - 24</b>	paying guests	<b>\$4,050</b>
<b>SINGLE SUPPLEMENT</b>	paying guests	<b>\$1,260</b>

The above pricing is land only, international airfare is at an additional cost. Travel insurance is optional and in addition to the above prices, please refer to insurance rates below.  
 For trips totaling \$3,501 - \$5,000: \$289 per person  
 For trips totaling \$5,001 - \$7,500: \$399 per person  
 For trips totaling \$7,501+: \$499 per person

Deposit due at time of booking (non-refundable): \$200 per person, + insurance cost if taken, payable by check

# SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD



## God Most High

God Most High,  
you gave authority over heaven and earth  
to your Son.  
He now fills all creation with his presence  
to the glory of your name.  
He guides and governs us  
as the head of his body, the Church,  
and he brings our needs before you.

In him we pray—  
deepen our love for you,  
fill us with the knowledge and wisdom  
we need  
to live as true disciples,  
and strengthen our hope in the age to come.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, May 24, 2020

For All Time



*Today's Readings: Acts 1:1–11; Psalm 47:2–3, 6–7, 8–9; Ephesians 1:17–23; Matthew 28:16–20.* In both Jewish and Gentile writings revered people were sometimes shown being taken up into heaven. Their ascension was a metaphor for divine approval. Luke draws on this imagery to show not only that God approves of Jesus but that Jesus shares God's power. Having ascended, Jesus is spiritually and sacramentally present at all times and in all places.

In Acts, the disciples are uncertain what to do once Jesus has ascended. Two men dressed in white must explain the significance of the event, just as in Luke's Gospel two men in white explained the significance of the empty tomb. In Matthew's account of the Gospel, the disciples are also

uncertain about all that is happening. They worship the Risen Lord, but "they doubted." Perhaps they struggled to believe that Jesus really would remain with them.

When we feel hesitant and doubtful, we are reassured by those first followers of Jesus, who also struggled yet went forth to share the Gospel. They chose to trust their Lord. They embraced the Spirit he sent them and rejoiced in their deepening knowledge of God and God's love for the world. By remaining one with Christ, who has authority over all, they became part of God's new creation and now share in the Father's glory. It is now our turn, as fellow members of Christ's Body, the Church, to show others that Christ remains in the world and to invite them to be part of his reign.



## THIS WEEK AT HOME

### Monday, May 25

#### Fill Us

Although Jesus' disciples think they understand him, Jesus insists that their understanding is incomplete: during his passion, they will abandon him. Only with the gift of the Holy Spirit will they find the courage to stay faithful. By contrast, Paul encounters men who have not heard of the Holy Spirit but who are well prepared to receive this gift. We need both the Spirit and the formation of our faith community to guide us forward. Pray for the Spirit to fill you and your faith community. *Today's Readings: Acts 19:1–8; Psalm 68:2–3ab, 4–5acd, 6–7ab; John 16:29–33.*

### Tuesday, May 26

#### Imitators

There are similarities between Paul's journey to Jerusalem and Jesus' preparations for his passion. In John's account of the Gospel, Jesus gives a long farewell discourse in which he talks with his disciples about all that is going to happen. Paul also makes a formal farewell before facing the hardships that await him. As he says goodbye, Paul urges his listeners to imitate Jesus just as he has. Hear more of Paul's heartfelt words by reading all or part of his letter to the Philippians. *Today's Readings: Acts 20:17–27; Psalm 68:10–11, 20–21; John 17:1–11a.*

### Wednesday, May 27

#### Set Apart

In the Gospel passage, the word *world* refers to all that opposes God. As Jesus continues his prayer to the Father, he speaks about how his followers are set apart from the world. He prays that God will further consecrate or sanctify them to continue his work of sharing the truth of God's love. Paul also was set apart for God's work, and he reminded others to remain steadfast in holiness. In what concrete ways can you set yourself apart from the world? *Today's Readings: Acts 20:28–38; Psalm 68:29–30, 33–35a, 35bc–36ab; John 17:11b–19.*

### Thursday, May 28

#### That All May Be One

Religion, sadly, often divides people instead of uniting them. The Pharisees and Sadducees disagreed on whether there was any kind of afterlife. Disagreements about beliefs and practices persist among Christians today. Such division compels us to bow our heads and echo Jesus' prayer for unity. *Today's Readings: Acts 22:30; 23:6–11; Psalm 16:1–2a and 5, 7–8, 9–10, 11; John 17:20–26.*

### Friday, May 29

#### In the Hands of Others

In Luke's Gospel account, Jesus tells his disciples that they will be handed over to kings and governors (21:12–13). In the passage from Acts, Paul is in the hands of the local governor who consults on his case with the king. In today's Gospel passage, Jesus tells Peter that one day Peter will be arrested and crucified. Centuries later, Christians still come into conflict with those in authority. Pray for those who are attacked or imprisoned because of their faith. *Today's Readings: Acts 25:13b–21; Psalm 103:1–2, 11–12, 19–20ab; John 21:15–19.*

### Saturday, May 30

#### The Work Continues

As we near the end of our Easter season, we hear the conclusions to the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel according to John. Paul has arrived at Rome, in fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy that his followers would be his witnesses throughout the world. Today Christian missionaries have crossed oceans to enter new regions and share the story of salvation. John's Gospel notes that Jesus said and did far more than any book could contain. The Jesus who has risen, ascended to his Father, and filled us with his Spirit continues his mission through us. May the good work we do in Jesus' name fill more volumes than could ever be written. *Today's Readings: Acts 28:16–20, 30–31; Psalm 11:4, 5 and 7; John 21:20–25.*

