

MAY 24, 2020

Scripture Reflection

What does faith and religion do for us? Ultimately, they remind us of some truths we conveniently forget: we are created by a loving God, we have imperfections, we sin, we need to be forgiven, we have a mission and a purpose, it's not just about us, and we hunger for the joy of salvation. These are human truths that are not dependent upon whether we like them. Ignoring them places us on the paths of comfort and satisfaction as we blindly pursue the busyness and superficiality of our empty lives. Instead of pursuing supernatural and lasting pleasure, we choose things that are easier and quicker to obtain: sex, drugs, travel, houses, cars, fame, popularity, self-achievement and satisfaction, physical enjoyment, and the like.

We may also find ourselves falling victim to more negative responses to what life brings us: anger, envy, lust, pride, gluttony, greed, and apathy. Human hearts can become so hardened to the truth that violence becomes the response of first choice. Being a Christian is hard! Yet, as Pope Francis reminds us, the Church needs to be a field hospital that has to be prepared to provide people with the remedy they need. What we need is Jesus Christ. The Church, with all of the glory of the sacraments, exists to help make Christ present and real for us. Once we find Christ, we find joy. Joy is a matter of the heart that is beyond pleasure and happiness. It is not found in some earthly satisfaction, only in Christ.

Once we accept that we are destined to be in Christ, then we will discover eternal life. Namely, "that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ." It is easy to conveniently forget truth and pursue illusions immediately within our grasp, but at what price? A man celebrating 60 years of marriage remarked that it took so much effort and so many attempts to convince his wife that they were meant to be together. Even his friends told him he was foolish. He easily could have given up and pursued other interests. He chose to persevere and is so grateful that he made that choice because he now has a pearl of great price. Do we see a value in persevering in our faith regardless of the cost? If we don't take the risk, we could lose more than we know.

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A PRAYER OF CONSECRATION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Most Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, you are the fairest fruit of God's redeeming love; you sing of the Father's mercy and accompany us with a mother's love. In this time of pandemic we come to you, our sign of sure hope and comfort. Today we renew the act of consecration and entrustment carried out by those who have gone before us.

With the love of a Mother and Handmaid, embrace our nation, our diocese, our parish, our families and ourselves which we entrust and consecrate to you, together with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

In a special way we commend to you those particularly in need of your maternal care.

Mary, Health of the Sick, sign of health, of healing, and of divine hope for the sick, we entrust to you all who are infected with the coronavirus.

Mary, Mother of Consolation, who consoles with a mother's love all who turn to you, we entrust to you all those who have lost loved ones in the pandemic.

Mary, Help of Christians, who comes to our rescue in every trial, we entrust to your loving protection all caregivers.

Mary, Queen and Mother of Mercy, who embraces all those who call upon your help in their distress, we entrust to you all who are suffering in any way from the pandemic.

Mary, Seat of Wisdom, who were so wonderfully filled with the light of truth, we entrust to you all who are working to find a cure to this pandemic.

Mary, Mother of Good Counsel, who gave yourself wholeheartedly to God's plan for the renewing of all things in Christ, we entrust to you all leaders and policymakers. Accept with the benevolence of a Mother the act of consecration that we make today with confidence, and help us to be your Son's instruments for the healing and salvation of our country and the world. Jesus is our Lord and Christ, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE CHURCH OF ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN

THE CATHEDRAL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

ONE CATHEDRAL SQUARE, ALTOONA, PENNSYLVANIA 16601-3315
CHURCH OFFICE: 814-944-4603

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS:

The process of formation for those seeking God through membership in the Catholic Christian community.

INFANT BAPTISM:

Arrange in advance for pre-baptismal instructions.

CONFIRMATION:

Ninth, tenth and eleventh grade students are invited to participate in the Confirmation Preparation Process.

RECONCILIATION:

Wednesday: 7:00 PM, Saturday: 12:30 PM.

Communal Penance Services: Advent and Lent.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK:

Upon Request and Communal celebration

MARRIAGE:

Arrange nine months in advance. Couples expected to participate in pre-marriage preparation program.

DEVOTIONS:

Charismatic Prayer - Normally 3rd Monday of the Month

Eucharistic Adoration - First Wednesday - 12:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Eucharistic Day - Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM:

September through April: Pre-Kindergarten thru 12.

Sunday morning 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM

Pre-Kindergarten thru 8.

Sunday Evening 6:15 PM - 8:15 PM

Grades 9 thru 12.

WEB: WWW.ALTOONACATHEDRAL.ORG

FAX: 814-942-4337

E-MAIL: ALTCATHEDRAL@DIOCESEAJ.ORG

EUCHARIST: DUE TO COVID-19, THERE ARE NO PUBLIC MASSES UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

Sunday:	5:00 PM (Vigil) 8:00 AM 10:00 AM 12:00 Noon 5:00 PM	Holyday:	5:30 PM (Vigil) 8:00 AM 12:00 Noon 5:30 PM	Weekday:	6:45 AM 12:00 Noon
				Saturday:	8:00 AM 12:00 Noon

Most Reverend Mark L. Bartchak, J.C.D., Bishop

Reverend Monsignor Stanley Carson, Administrator

Reverend Father Dennis M. Kurdziel, Parochial Vicar

CHRISTIAN INITIATION TEAM - 944-4603

CATHOLICS RETURNING HOME - 944-4603

MAIL MINISTRY TO ELDERLY, HOMEBOUND,
SERIOUSLY SICK, AND GRIEVING - 944-4603

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Web: www.holytrinitycatholic.school

Altoona Campus (Pre-K thru Grade 4) - 381-7011

Hollidaysburg Campus (Pre-K thru Grade 4) - 695-6112

Middle School Campus (Grades 5 thru 8) - 942-7835

BISHOP GUILFOYLE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Web: www.bishopguilfoyle.org - 944-4014

DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Chris Laraia - Pre-K thru 8 - 312-7317

Jean Koury - 9 thru 12 - 949-2777

Religious Education Office: Sundays - 943-7424

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY

Leslie C. Thayer, MM, CAGO

Music Ministry Office - 944-2044

E-mail: lthayer@dioceseaj.org

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE CITY OF ALTOONA SINCE 1851

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 24, 2020

Readings: Acts 1:12-14; 1 Pt 4:13-16; Jn 17:1-11

MASS INTENTIONS

May 25, Monday: Sts. Bede, Gregory, and Mary Magdalene

Readings: Acts 19:1-8; Jn:16:29-33

+ Poor Souls

+ John Capouellez Sr. Birthday (Family)

May 26, Tuesday: Saint Philip Neri, Priest

Readings: Acts 20:17-27; Jn 17:1-11

+ Allison Purdy Ritchey (Becki Grace)

Susan Bauer (Children)

May 27, Wednesday: St. Augustine of Canterbury

Readings: Acts 20:28-38; Jn 17:11-19

+ Geraldine Rose (Colleen Sheehan)

Spirit Welfare of Bishop Mark (Dana Miller)

May 28, Thursday: Easter Weekday

Readings: Acts 22:30; 23:6-11; Jn 17:20-26

+ Irene Schlecht (Jim & Elaine Weaver)

+ Kevin Sheetz (Patty & Joe Pufka)

May 29, Friday: Easter Weekday

Readings: Acts 25:13-21; Jn 21:15-19

+ Danyll Rougeux Anniversary (Mom & Dad)

+ Bev Woodring Anniversary (Tom Byrne)

May 30, Saturday: Easter Weekday

Readings: Acts 28:16-20, 30-31; Jn 21:20-25

+ Carrie Detwiler (Mom & Dad)

Nicholas Hockenberry Birthday (Gloria & Family)

Vigil: PENTECOST SUNDAY

Readings: Acts 2:1-11; 1 Cor 12:3-7, 12-13; Jn 20:19-23

+ Alice Winkler (Friends at Forever Media)

Please remember our sick in your prayers.

Facebook

Our parish has created an official Facebook page and the address is <https://www.facebook.com/cathedralofaltoona>. The link is found at the top of our parish's webpage. The link at the bottom of the page was evidently created by Wikipedia and is an unofficial page. Our official page will gradually become a convenient way to keep people informed and post notices.

Office Hours

The office hours are Monday through Friday 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Contributions

Even during a pandemic, the financial support of parishioners is very important to a parish. However, due to their own financial challenges during a time like this, families might not be able to sustain their current level of giving. As a parish we will need to curtail spending and make adjustments.

CATHEDRAL WILL BE OPEN FOR PRIVATE PRAYER

The cathedral will be open for private prayer, for 25 people or less, from 7:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. Visitors may enter only through the doors at 13th avenue and the alley. Designated seating will be available at the Blessed Sacrament Chapel and at the Chapel of our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament. Facial masks are to be worn, social distancing is to be observed, and persons are asked to self-sanitize their seating area before and after their visit.

This week, the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available at these special times: Wednesday, May 27, at 6:30 P.M., Saturday, May 30 at Noon, and Monday to Friday at 7:15 A.M and Noon.

CATHOLIC MINISTRIES DRIVE

Gratitude is extended to the 104 donors who have pledged \$28,781 towards our parish \$51,796 Catholic Ministries Drive target. If you have not contributed and are able to do so, please help us support the valuable ministries that enable us to be the Church Jesus calls us to be. Thank you.

Foundation Seeks College Junior & Seniors Scholarship Applicants

2020 Welge (WELL-ghee) Scholarship Applications are now available for registered parishioners who are entering their junior or senior year at an accredited college or university. Blair County Please visit the "Grants" page of the Independent Catholic Foundation website, www.icfdaj.org to download, complete and sign the application, which should be emailed to grants@icfdaj.org no later than 4:00 p.m., Friday June 12. The Welge Scholarship Endowment has grown sufficiently for the Foundation to issue three \$500 awards this July.



OFFERTORY COLLECTION

Everlasting Easter

The Easter season is almost over. This season is always a tougher one for us Catholics. We get Advent and Lent: preparation. We are on board with Christmas, mainly because we like to keep up our decorations until someone tells us the exact day we must take them down. But Easter as a season is a bit more difficult to observe. The rest of the world has moved on. There are no Easter eggs left in store windows and all those religious movies on television have given way to reruns or season-ending episodes. It just feels like Easter anywhere ... except in the Church.

The truth is that it should feel like Easter all year-round in the Church. Every Sunday, we celebrate a mini-Easter. Our Lord is ALIVE! He is risen and alive, and we need to celebrate. We also need to be about the work of the Lord. We are an Easter people who bear witness to his resurrection through our stewardship. If he had never risen, then we would be called to nothing by no one. But he lives! As this Easter season is drawing to a close, it is prudent to reflect on what his death and resurrection mean for each of us. How has it changed us? How does it motivate us? It doesn't look like Easter in most corners of the world, so it is up to us to bring a little Easter to every place we go and to everyone we meet.

—Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

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Question:

Why do we kneel at Mass?

Answer:

Since the beginnings of the Church, kneeling has been a key posture of prayer. We see Sts. Peter and Paul in the Acts of the Apostles kneeling in prayer. Early in the 4th century, the Council of Nicea prohibited kneeling on Sundays and special feasts. Kneeling began more as a posture of penance for our sins, but in the history of the Church, it has become more a posture of reverence and solemn prayer.

You will notice that the times we kneel at Mass are tied to the consecration of the holy Eucharist. We kneel in both anticipation of what will occur and then in awe of what has taken place: Jesus Christ becomes truly present to us under the guise of bread and wine. The profoundness of this event has over time led the Church to mandate in the current General Instruction of the Roman Missal that kneeling is the only posture allowed during this time. The sheer awesomeness of the holy Eucharist leads us to fall to our knees in wonder and thanksgiving.

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A NOTE FROM MSGR. STAN CARSON: THE CHURCH'S FIRST NOVENA

The nine days between the Feast of our Lord's Ascension into heaven and the Feast of Pentecost is sometimes referred to as the Church's first novena, nine days of prayer.

The Acts of the Apostles tell us that the apostles and several other disciples, including women and men, along with Mary the mother of Jesus, were engaged in "continuous prayer" as they awaited the descent of the Holy Spirit. The time between the Ascension and Pentecost was a time of waiting and transition.

We are also going through a time of waiting and transition. We are gradually moving into a fuller participation in the life of the Church and learning how to live in society while adjusting to what is being called a "new normal." We have been patiently waiting for the "green light" that will allow us to go into our cherished routines.

While keeping our distances, we have been engaged in "continuous prayer" too. There is consolation in knowing that we are praying for one another and that we are accompanied by Mary and the saints. The Holy Spirit will continue to be the Church's source of guidance and strength.

Radio Mass

Our parish's live radio Mass will be on Sunday, at 10:00 A.M. on WFBG 1290AM. We are pleased to be able to provide this service and we are grateful to our sponsors.

Ministry to the Elderly, Seriously Ill and Grieving

We will be approaching the fifth year which began as a simple Thanksgiving Card to our parishioners who were on the First Friday visitation list and those residing in elder care homes. Our twenty person committee has been sending cards, making phone calls and visiting with some men and women who invited us into their homes. We are thankful for your support but want to tell you that committee members feel as they are receiving more than what they are giving. Paula Miller who began by praying a simple Hail Mary with a resident over four years ago shared, "I cannot begin to tell you how enriched my life has become since joining this ministry. After each visit, I would leave more blessed than when I arrived. Our homebound so appreciate that we, as a member of their parish family, remember them either with a card or a visit. Their smiles are priceless!"

If you can please call the office 814-944-4603, with the name and address of a family member or friend who you know would welcome a kind word and a prayer through the mail we would be able to reach out to many more. If you would like to join this ministry please call the office at 814-944-4603, or Jeanne Thompson at 814-317-2672. And we can always use stamps!