

Saint Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church

May 21, 2017/SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

PASTOR'S CORNER

Since the beginning of the Easter season we've been reading from the Acts of the Apostles. It's one of the liturgical staples of Easter—that and more alleluias than usual, and white vestments, and the Paschal candle, to name a few things.

But we don't read the very beginning of the Book of Acts until the end of Easter. We start Easter reading the preaching of the early apostles, which begins in the second chapter. The first chapter involves two events that make sense of the bold preaching of the apostles (who previously had been timid and weak): the ascension of Jesus and the sending of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus tells his apostles it is better for them that he goes, it must have sounded incredible to them. How could it be better? Stay with us, Lord!

Well, unsurprisingly, they didn't know what he had in mind to do—they couldn't have. But they trusted, and they received the gift of the Spirit, and only then would they understand why it was better for Jesus to go. Pope St. Leo the Great says that Christ's bodily presence passes over into the sacraments, and now—with his physical presence removed—the Church lives by faith. And that's a great thing. We are not slaves to historical accident and circumstance. We don't have to live in Jesus' own day and age, and country, to have contact with him. We shouldn't envy the apostles for having lived when they did and for being contemporaries of Jesus of Nazareth. To be sure, it would have been wonderful to have seen him in his own time and place during his human career: but it wouldn't have necessarily saved us. What saves us is faith, which we have through his Holy Spirit here and now, and which unites us to him in a way that seeing him with bodily eyes can't give us. Remember: many knew Jesus on earth and didn't believe in him. What good was that for them?

So, faith liberates us from the constraints of time and space, and unites us to Jesus, here and now, and anytime, and anywhere. He is more than a historical figure. He's the living Lord, who always lives to make intercession for us.

Next Sunday, we celebrate the great event of Christ's ascension, and the following Sunday Pentecost. We should all pray to be filled with the gift of grace and the true freedom of the Gospel.

PARISH MEMBERSHIP All parishioners should participate fully in parish life (*this especially means worshipping at Mass on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation*), be registered here, and contribute to the support the parish to the extent possible. We often get requests for recommendations and permissions for parishioners to serve as godparents and sponsors. If we don't know you, we can't give that testimony on your behalf. You may have been baptized here (or gone to Catholic schools) but you need to be currently practicing and registered in your local parish (children are obviously registered with their parents; adults need to make their own arrangements). The Church requires that baptisms and marriages be celebrated in one's own parish. If one is not an active parishioner, problems could arise at those important times.

Baptisms Usually 1st and 3rd Sundays. Contact the pastor to schedule. First-time parents please also schedule a "pre-Jordan" preparation class—offered the 2nd Wednesday of each month, at 7:15 p.m. in the parish center.

Weddings Active parishioners contact the parish office no later than six months prior to the desired wedding date. Marriage preparation normally includes several meetings with a priest, several meetings with a mentor couple of the parish, a weekend of conferences offered by the diocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life, NFP training, and FOCCUS diagnostic. *If someone in your family is planning to get married*, please encourage them to speak to their pastor. The marriages of Catholics (whether or not they're marrying other Catholics) need to be conformable with Church law, and that requires that they receive suitable catechesis in preparation for marriage, and marry according to a certain rite.

Eucharistic exposition Wednesdays following the noon Mass until 7:00 p.m. Benediction. For information, and to volunteer to take hours of adoration, contact Regina Cano at (614) 582-8588.

Knights of Columbus Contact Trinidad Cano at (740) 819-8002. The K of C offer a hot breakfast every 4th Sunday following morning Masses, and lead the Rosary after the 11:00 Mass on 5th Sundays.

Choir We're always in need of more voices in the choir. Contact the parish office or the choir director Mrs. Adams. Weekly rehearsals are Wednesdays, after Benediction.

Funeral luncheons Contact Mary Margaret Murphy at (740) 452-4454.

Rental information To reserve Rosary Hall or Activity Center (i.e. the school gym) contact Mary Ann Ewart at maewart@gmail.com or (740) 319-2449.

Pregnancy counseling Heartbeat Family Center/Pregnancy Distress: (740) 450-5437, www.heartbeats.org.

Prayer requests (740) 453-8397, (740) 297-7164, (740) 588-0314, or (740) 704-3136

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MASS INTENTIONS

It is a holy and pious thought to pray for the dead.
cf. 2 Maccabees, 12.

Sunday, May 21

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

5:00pm John & Peg Mattingly (+)
7:00am Tom Quinn (+)
9:00am Sandy Veneman (+)
11:00am People of the parish

Monday, May 22

Easter Weekday

8:00am Cecil Mary Soller (+)
12Noon Mary Norris (+)

Tuesday, May 23

Easter Weekday

8:00am Herb & Emma Noll Family
12Noon William Heil Family

Wednesday, May 24

Easter Weekday

8:00am Fallen-away Catholics
12Noon Kay E. Hamme (+)

Thursday, May 25

Easter Weekday

8:00am End to abortion
12Noon Laura & Orville Henderson Family

Friday, May 26

Easter Weekday

8:00am John & Peg Mattingly (+)
12Noon Mark Stephen Thompson (+)

Saturday, May 27

Easter Weekday

9:00am Mary Wilson

Sunday, May 28

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

5:00pm Stan Goodsill (+)
7:00am Herb & Myrtle Durant Family (+)
9:00am People of the parish
11:00am Ted Paulus

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Monday, May 22

7:00 p.m. Scouts (Parish Center)

Tuesday, May 23

2:00 p.m. Bible Study with Fr. Luke
6:00 p.m. Rosary for Life (church)
7:00 p.m. RCIA (Parish Office)
7:00 p.m. M.V.R.L. Meeting (Parish Office)

Wednesday, May 24

Eucharistic exposition following noon Mass
7:00 p.m. Benediction
7:00 p.m. Choir rehearsal (church)

Thursday, May 25

6:30 p.m. Bible Study (Parish Office)

Saturday, May 27

10:30 a.m. Bishop Rosecrans H. S. Baccalaureate Mass

PARISH FINANCES

Weekend of May 14

Main collection total \$6,904.96*
Weekly Budget 11,538.00
This week's deficit -4,633.04

Thank you!

** This figure includes envelope and loose amounts. It does not include automatic electronic donations.*

Upcoming special collections

This weekend Catholic Communications Campaign
June 4 Catholic Home Missions
June 25 Peter's Pence



**PLEASE REMEMBER SAINT THOMAS
AQUINAS CHURCH IN YOUR WILL**

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Eucharist and true Communion

This past Saturday morning we celebrated the first Holy Communion of our second graders. I came over to the office to type out some thoughts for the homily at Mass, but peeked at some news pages online first. The headlines on the Drudge Report were shocking: they were all about the big cyber-hacking that occurred between May 12 & 13. Here are the various headline/links, all lined up:

The Day the Earth was Hacked

Biggest Ransomware outbreak ever

99 countries attacked

Could cost lives

NSA Cyberweapon

Hospitals crippled, Telecoms snarled

German Train Chaos

Russian Govt. hit

FedEx whacked

Speed and scale of attack startles experts

You might think it a stretch to connect all this stuff with the occasion of a first Communion Mass. But I did. It occurred to me that this has a lot to say to us—and about the topic of Holy Communion. This monster that is the Internet—wasn't it supposed to be *precisely* the world's attempt at establishing its own kind of sacred communion? Remember all the hype and euphoria back in the early 1990s when Al Gore first invented the Internet, about the information superhighway that would make the world small and bring us all together, enabling people on opposite sides of the world to “interface” 24/7 and make us all a tight-knit global community? A generation later it's a kind of idol of our age, a *sine qua non* of civilized existence, like air. The Internet was supposed to do more than anything else since air travel and Marconi's wireless to overcome the handicap of distance between nations and individuals. And then came Facebook, and “friending”—yikes. (Question: why couldn't they at least use passable English and call it “befriending”?) The Web has done more to murder good English than anything since the Luftwaffe.)

Well now. How is that working out? There's no doubting the revolution in communication and economics the Internet has delivered. And comfort, and convenience. You can make dinner reservations online, presto! You can order things now on Amazon.com and get them in 48 hours with your prime account, or even 24 hours expedited shipping, or even, depending on where you are, have them delivered via drone the same day, *voilà!* You can skype with Grandma on the other side of the country or the world (assuming she can manage logging on). Cool beans. Banking is done online, etc., etc. But being a technological development, it's just a tool, and while its conveniences are many and unquestionable, its dark side is even more obvious. Aside from the very obvious example of Internet pornography, which

is doing untold harm to lives and marriages and families, the Internet itself can be invaded and controlled by malevolent forces, turning something that supposed to promise togetherness and communion into an agent of division and destructiveness. It's made the world smaller, all right, and more's the pity. Foreign computer hackers make themselves felt in your life while you're still in your pajamas with identity theft and phishing scams. Rather than easing life and making us more hip to a global worldview, this ubiquitous part of our world, after decades now, has made its users distrustful and suspicious once they're burned.

The deeper lesson we need to learn from this is that every time the world sets up a rival plan to God's, it proves to be disappointing, and a snare. It's nothing new. The serpent tried to improve on God's plan for Adam and Eve's happiness by convincing them that he meant them harm, keeping them under his thumb and not letting them grow up. That rival worldview—so rational, so plausible, and so satisfying to assert oneself against God—in fact alienated the whole human race from God, one another, and ourselves. It's the root of every other alienation the world knows. The people of Babel (see Genesis) thought they would build a lovely city all the way up to the heavens, and bring heaven to earth, a Utopian existence. It was another attempt to become like God, and God confused the people in their speech in punishment—as a way of stemming the evil they otherwise achieve collaboratively. God would make us like him according to his own wise plan—it is not the kind of thing that can be seized.

And the Internet—which is really the Tower of Babel of our age, the world's manner of establishing (and enforcing!) communion—is fraught with danger, and it has made us anything but “friends.” The kind of *true and satisfying* communion God wants us to have with one another is possible only by having communion with him first. We can't effect it ourselves. It has to be received, as a gift. We have to *receive* Communion, if we are to be happy. It, too, cannot be snatched or laid down by us. God's plan of Communion for us is Holy Communion, and it brings about Christ's peace in our lives and our world, not the world's “peace.” And in this truly Holy Communion there is no risk of harm to ourselves. It is an antidote to death, and there is nothing in it but eternal life.

And how does God bring about his Communion? Through the body of Jesus his Son. Jesus' work of salvation would not have been complete without the institution of the sacrament of the Eucharist, which he did the night before he was to die. The deeper our faith when we receive this Eucharist, the more intimate our communion with God. And our communion in this sacrament is not only with God, but with all those also in communion with God, especially through the Holy Communion of the Eucha-



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rist—those who eat the same sacred food in faith, hope, and charity, are kin to one another in the kingdom. We are sons in the Son—heirs of divine life through the human nature of Jesus Christ which he took, and by faith in him we live anew through him, have been reborn in him. Our reception of the Eucharist increases the life we have received by Baptism. When we receive this sacrament in charity, and prayerfully, and attentively, it makes us more Godlike, for here is an instance where it is really true that we are what we eat. We call it “Communion” for no other reason that that it both signifies and causes communion between God and us, and through God between other believers and us. If we receive Communion in the state of grace, we have true union with everyone else on the face of the earth who likewise abides in God’s grace and has received this food of everlasting life; and we also have communion with the blessed in heaven, whose communion with God no longer needs the sacrament that we so need. We certainly do not know everyone else, and we will not meet them all this side of heaven, but we can be said to have a truer, more lasting, and happier “interconnectedness” with our fellow Christians than anything the Internet or any technological advance can afford. One day we will meet, please God, but until then we have within us the same source of life, God himself, who accustoms us gradually to his thinking and his loving through the revelation of Jesus Christ. If we want true and perfect Communion—intimacy with God and neighbor without risk of being betrayed by those who draw close to us—only God can supply it. It is provided for us by the one who submitted his body to horrific pains and death for us, and then rose to come look for us: not to punish us but to invite us out of the dark and cold of isolation which is sin’s effect, into the warmth and health of divine life, through that very same humanity and body.

(I was joking about Al Gore inventing the Internet.)

2017 Diocesan Senior Citizens Celebration June 6

The 40th annual diocesan Senior Citizens Celebration is Tuesday, June 6, 2017, at St. Joan of Arc Church at 10700 Liberty Road in Powell. Bishop Campbell will celebrate Mass at 10:30 a.m. Mass will be followed by a luncheon. Registration cost is \$10. This annual event is a great opportunity for food, faith, and fellowship with seniors from the 23-county Catholic Diocese of Columbus. When registering, please make check payable to the Office for Social Concerns, Catholic Diocese of Columbus, 197 E. Gay Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215. Questions? Call (614) 241-2540 or email socmailbox@columbuscatholic.org. Registration deadline is June 1.

Please pray for the home-bound of the parish:

Margaret Gladys Abbott, Nancy Arledge, William & Jan Barry, Mary Batteiger, Gertrude Bell, Madelyn Bronkar, Mathilda Clark, Bart & Josephine Cooper, Mary Cowden, Herman Crock, Michael Curtis, Jeanne Dittmar, Evelyn DiVincenzo, Shirley Echemann, Betty Fedor, Frances Feerick, Beverly Foley, Isabel Gilchrist, Mary Ellen Grafton, Sandra Honeywell, Patricia Huck, Eileen Johnston, Mike Kline, Dorothy Loewendick, Henry Long, Nancy Longstreth, David Macenko, Dolores Mahon, Josephine Marshall, Patricia Perrone, Alice Pitcock, Mary Polascak, Mary Postlewaite, Mary Rosta, George and Barb Ridenour, Joe and Barbara Ritchey, Regina Ritchey, Mary Lou Scott, Barbara Schumacher, Loretta Silfko, Terri Woods

Operation Feed: Today, May 21, Christ’s Table (28 S. 6th St.) is sponsoring a fundraising pancake breakfast from 10:00am-2:00pm to benefit the 15 food pantries and 4 hot meal programs of the Muskingum County Hunger Network. Cost is \$5/person. Thank you for helping us help others!

Catholic Men’s Ministry is meeting on Monday, May 22 at 7:00 p.m., at St. Mary’s, 6280 Saint Mary Rd., Nashport. We will start with Eucharistic exposition, Benediction, and prayer, and continue the discussion on “Into The Breach” by Bishop Thomas J. Olmstead. Light refreshments will be served. For further information contact Dave Bonifant at (740) 763-4647 or Mike Stickle at (740) 258-3138.

Bishop Rosecrans High School is seeking host families for exchange students for the 2017-2018 school year. Host families are expected to provide a safe home environment. Tuition and other expenses are paid by the student’s family. Young, old, single or married may apply. A monthly stipend is provided. Contact Mark Dosch at (740) 452-4762 or Helen Brooks at (740) 704-8681.

RESOURCE SPECIALIST WANTED The Coming Home Network International, Nashport, OH is seeking a part-time Resource Specialist. Job Requirements and Areas of Responsibility (not limited to): ● Answering the phone ● Data entry ● Shipping and Receiving ● competence with Microsoft Word, Excel, Internet, and email ● Have the ability to work in a team and independently ● Must understand, support, and embrace the mission of The Coming Home Network International. A copy of the job description is available upon request. Interested individuals may send their resumés (no later than May 26) to: The Coming Home Network International, Attn: Personnel Dept., PO Box 8290, Zanesville, OH 43702-8290 or via email to ann@chnetwork.org.

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Summer Kickoff Party!
@ THE ST. THOMAS FESTIVAL

June 8	June 9	June 10
THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
5:00 pm - 10:00 pm	5:00 pm - Midnight	6:00 pm - Midnight

<p>Dr. Laura's <i>Musical Adventures</i> 5:30-7:30pm</p> <p>Followed by: Chalcraft & Mohr Formerly of the T-Birds 8:00-10:00pm <i>Playing Acoustic Oldies</i></p>	<p>THESE GUYS LIVE 8:00pm - Midnight</p> <p>ROCKIN' CENTRAL OHIO 10 YEARS 2007-2017</p>	<p>J. Tiger Entertainment Presents Name That Tune 7:00-9:00 pm \$500 Prize! To the Winning Team</p> <p>Followed by: DJ CAMPALLA 9:00-Midnight</p>
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Raffles! <p>Bingo</p>	Free Admission! <p>Children's Games</p>	Great Food! <p>Black Jack</p>
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Located at the corner of Fifth & Shinnick Streets in Downtown Zanesville

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