



## CHURCH OF SAINT MARY

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## MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH

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Dear Parish Family,

June 26, 2011

Happy anniversary! Last year, this weekend, was my first pastoral letter. It was sort of a "getting to know you" piece. I hope these letters have been as helpful to you as they have been informative for me to research and write.

Last week I mentioned that we have reached the end of our 2011 Catholic Services Appeal. It's still not too late. If you haven't returned your CSA card, or if you've misplaced it, hopefully you have received a new one in the mail. If not, please stop by the parish offices to get one. It's not so much the amount you give; but that provide support through prayers and return the card.

As we reach the end of June - the month of the Sacred Heart, please remember the Pope's general prayer intention for this month which is, "that priests, united to the Heart of Christ, may always be true witnesses of the caring and merciful love of God." Your prayers are a great gift for all priests living and deceased! Summer vacation is NOT a time to take a vacation from God! Come to Mass! God bless you!

Fr. David

## Sacred Signs and Symbols

## Gifts of Bread & Wine

There is yet another path that leads to God. Had not Christ's own words made it known to us so plainly, and the liturgy repeated them with so assured a confidence, we should not be bold enough to speak of it. Seeing God, loving God, by consciously turning toward him with our minds and wills, though a real union, is yet not a union of being with being. It is not only our minds and our wills that strive to possess God. As the psalm says, "My heart and my flesh are athirst for the living God." Only then shall we be at rest when our whole being is joined to his. Not by any mingling or confusion of natures, for creature and creator are forever distinct, and to suppose otherwise would be as nonsensical as it is presumptuous. Nevertheless, besides the union of love and knowledge, there is another union, that of life and being.

We desire, are compelled to desire, this union, and the Scripture and the Liturgy place upon our lips words that give profound expression to our longing. As the body desires food and drink, just so closely does our individual life desire to be united with God. We hunger and thirst after God. It is not enough for us to know him and to love him. We would clasp him, draw him to ourselves, hold him fast, and, bold as it sounds, we would take him into ourselves as we do our necessary food and drink, and thereby still and satisfy our hunger to the full.

The liturgy of Corpus Christi repeats to use these words of Christ: "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, the same shall also live by me." Those are the words. For us to prefer such a claim as a thing due to us of right would border on blasphemy. But since it is God that speaks, we inwardly assent and believe.

But let us not presume on them as if in any way they effaced the boundary between creature and Creator. In deepest reverence, and yet without fear, let us acknowledge the longing which God himself has planted in us, and rejoice in this gift of his exceeding goodness. "My flesh," Christ says to us, "is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed ... whosoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in them ... As the Father hath given me to have life in myself, so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me." To eat his flesh, to drink his blood, to eat him, to absorb into ourselves the living God - it is beyond any wish we might be capable of forming for ourselves, yet it satisfies to the full what we long for - of necessity long for - from the bottom of our souls.

Bread is food. It is wholesome, nourishing food for which we never lose our appetite. Under the form of bread God becomes for us even the food of life. "We break: a bread," writes Saint Ignatius of Antioch to the faithful at Ephesus, "we break a bread that is the food of immortality." By this food our being is so nourished with God himself that we exist in him and he in us.

Wine is drink. To be exact, it is more than drink, more than a liquid like water that merely quenches thirst. "Wine that maketh glad the heart" is the biblical expression. The purpose of wine is not only to quench thirst, but also to give pleasure and satisfaction and exhilaration. "My cup, how goodly it is, how plenteous!" Literally, how intoxicating, though not in the sense of drinking to excess. Wine possesses a sparkle, a perfume, a vigor, that expands and clears the imagination. Under the form of wine Christ gives us his divine blood. It is no plain and sober draught. It was bought at a great price, at a divinely excessive price. "Blood of Christ, inebriate me," prays Saint Ignatius of Loyola, that Knight of the Burning Heart. In one of the antiphons for the feast of Saint Agnes, the blood of Christ is called a mystery of ineffable beauty. "I have drawn milk and honey from his lips, and his blood hath given fair color to my cheeks."

For our sakes Christ became bread and wine, food and drink. We make bold to eat him and to drink him. This bread gives us solid and substantial strength. This wine bestows courage, joy out of all earthly measure, sweetness, beauty, limitless enlargement and perception. It brings life in intoxicating excess, both to possess and to impart.

# THE YEAR IN REVIEW - OH, HOW TIME FLIES

We've been together for twelve months!

What has happened this past year?

## *Both parishes:*

In the sanctuaries, the crucifixes from the original church buildings have both been restored and placed on the crosses - also from the original churches. We discovered that the holes lined up with the bolts on the back of the corpuses. Each set a perfect match!

More live flowers are being used, and live plants instead of artificial flowers. The instruction for the Mass very strongly insists on live flowers and plants as a sign of God's design in creation with His gift of life - as opposed to the man's designs in dead plastic.

Historic chalices from the original churches were cleaned-up and restored at both parishes. The chalice at St. Mary's is sterling silver with a gold cup and dates from around 1905. The chalice at Mt. St. Joseph was donated by the Altar Society and dates from the 1940s and is gold-plated.

Images of the Divine Mercy were donated and placed for veneration in both churches. The particular feast day of Divine Mercy is the Sunday after Easter; and a novena asking for mercy for the world, and begins on Good Friday and ends on the weekend of the feast.

The organ at St. Mary's was repaired after problems with the electrical circuits blew a bunch of fuses and fried a couple of circuit boards. The organ at Mt. St. Joseph's is slated to be repaired sometime in the future. The document on the Sacred Liturgy from Vatican II says that the organ should be given pride of place as the musical instrument most suited to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

## *Saint Mary*

Candle stands were placed in front of the statue of the Christ Child with Madonna near the sanctuary, and in the chapel to Our Lady of Guadalupe near the front entrance of the church. A beautiful full-size representation of the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe was found in storage, and was placed in the chapel, as well.

The high pulpit was cleaned out, its wooden ambo was replaced, and an image of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception was hung from the high pulpit ambo. The Immaculate Conception is the title of Our Lady to which St. Mary's Church is dedicated. The feast day is December 8.

The electronic carillon (which was declared "unfixable" by the manufacturer) was repaired by a very skilled gentleman from Nashville, TN. He worked us in-between two jobs downstate, and only charged us for mileage from Detroit. He also worked diligently through the night and by sunrise the Bells of St. Mary's were ringing again!

## *Mt. St. Joseph*

The cracks on the inside walls from the building settling were patched and re-painted.

The Stations of the Cross from the original church building were restored and moved to the main worship space.

The carpet in the parish hall was professionally steam cleaned to buy a little time; and should be replaced before the fall after appropriate abatement of the old flooring material.

Beautiful chalice veils were purchased for use with the newly restored chalice at Mass.

## *St. Mary School*

New doors were installed in the gymnasium / parish hall; and a new door was installed in the kitchen.

A tree was planted in memory of Owen Summerfeld, a kindergartener who passed away during the spring.

An icon of Christ the Teacher was given to all Catholic schools by the bishop during Catholic Schools Week.

## *Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!*

Only through your generous support of time, talent, and treasure can we continue to move forward with projects at both parishes. If you've never thought about volunteering - give it a try! We need *your* help! God bless you for your generosity and prayers!