



## CHURCH OF SAINT MARY

510 N. Prospect Ave. • Alma, MI 48801  
Office (989)463-5370 • Fax (989)463-1369

## MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH

605 S. Franklin St. • St. Louis, MI 48880  
Office (989)681-5080 • Fax (989)681-2887



Dear Parish Family,

September 26, 2010

I want to thank those who have been donating plants from their own gardens as well as those who have been helping to spruce up the landscaping around the parish buildings. First impressions are very important, and how our buildings looks says a lot to the people who drive by during the day.

Please remember, Sabina's retirement party will be October 9 after the 4:30 pm Mass at St. Mary. This will be a pot lock with pulled pork and hot dogs provided. Please bring a dish to pass.

On Sunday afternoons at 4:30 pm, I have been offering Mass at Alma College in the chapel on campus. This is the latest Mass in the area; so if you know of anyone who is unable to attend the regular liturgies at our parishes, please invite them to use this opportunity to attend weekend Mass.

Next weekend begins the formal counts of Mass attendance which we report to the diocesan offices. This will happen for all the weekend liturgies in October. During this time, we will also be updating parish records. Please take the time to fill out one of the cards and return it in the collection basket.

October is the month of the Holy Rosary. Our parishes pray the Rosary 25 minutes before every Mass. This month is a good time to start a new habit of prayer.

Next Saturday, I will be downstate for my oldest nephew's wedding. Please welcome Fr. Brian Van Hove, who will offer the Saturday 4:30 pm Mass.

On Friday, October 22 at 7:00 pm, Jim and Mary Cowan from Steubenville, Ohio will lead a live Praise and Worship concert at St. Mary.

God bless you. Thank you for your continued prayers. Know that I pray for you daily.

*Fr. David*

# *The Faith Explained*

## **ANGELS & ARCHANGELS**

Archangel are angels of high rank and are found in both Old and New Testament traditions. St. Michael, St. Gabriel, and St. Raphael are the archangels named in the Bible. In the Old Testament, St. Michael, serves as a warrior and advocate for Israel in Daniel 10:13. St. Gabriel is mentioned in the Book of Daniel (8:15-17). The book of Tobit mentions St. Raphael. The New Testament speaks frequently of angels (e.g., angels giving messages to Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds; angels ministering to Christ after his temptation in the wilderness, an angel visiting Christ in his agony, angels at the tomb of the risen Christ, the angels who liberate the Apostles Peter and Paul from prison); however, it makes only two references to "archangels." St. Michael in mentioned in Jude 1:9; and I Thessalonians 4:16, where the "voice of an archangel" will be heard at the return of Christ. The archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael are venerated in the Catholic Church with a feast on September 29. The word archangel derives from the Greek αρχάγγελος "*archangelos*" meaning 'chief messenger.'

A Guardian Angel is an angel assigned to protect and guide a particular person. Belief in guardian angels can be traced throughout all antiquity. Belief in both the Eastern and the Western Churches is that guardian angels serve to protect whichever person God assigns them to, and present prayer to God on that person's behalf.

The feast of the Guardian Angels on October 2. Below is a tradition Guardian Angel Prayer.

(In English)

*Angel of God, my guardian dear  
to whom God's love commits me here.  
Ever this day/night be at my side  
to light, to guard, to rule and guide.  
Amen.*

(In Latin)

*Angele Dei,  
qui custos es mei,  
me, tibi commissum pietate superna,  
illumina, custodi, rege et gubernna.  
Amen.*

(In Spanish)

*Ángel de Dios, que eres mi custodio,  
pues la bondad divina me  
ha encomendado a ti,  
ilumíname, dirígeme, guárdame.  
Amén.*

*[The first prayer I ever learned as a child was the Guardian Angel Prayer. Please learn this prayer and teach it to each other.  
Parents and grandparents can teach it to their children and grandchildren. – Fr. David]*

*the*  
**Psalm**  
Psalm 146

# **"Praise the Lord my soul!"**



# The Biblical Roots of The Mass

Long before the New Testament books were written — before any churches were built, before the first disciple died as a martyr for the faith — the Mass was the center of life for the Church.

St. Luke sums it up in the Acts of the Apostles: “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayers” (Acts 2:42). Luke manages to get so much detail into the single sentence. The first Christians were eucharistic by nature: they gathered for “the breaking of the bread and the prayers.” They were formed by the Word of God, the “apostles’ teaching.” When they met as a Church, their worship culminated in “fellowship” — the Greek word is *koinonia*, communion.

The Mass was the center of life for the disciples of Jesus, and so it has ever been. Even today, the Mass is where we experience the apostolic teaching and communion, the breaking of the bread and the prayers.

St. Luke focuses primarily on the externals, which are mighty by themselves, but the Mass is still so much more.

The first Christians were Jews, living in a Jewish culture, steeped in Jewish forms of worship. They saw the Eucharist as the fulfillment of all the rites of the Old Covenant. Jesus’ sacrifice had rendered Israel’s ceremonial laws obsolete, but it had not dispensed entirely with ritual worship. Jesus himself established rites for the New Covenant: baptism (Mt 28:19), for example, and sacramental absolution (Jn 20:22–23). He reserved the greatest solemnity, however, for the Eucharist (Lk 22:20).

The liturgy of the new covenant had been foreshadowed in the rituals of the old. The Gospels make an explicit connection between the Mass and the Passover meal (Lk 22:15). The Epistle to the Hebrews see the Mass in light of the Temple’s animal sacrifices (Heb 13:10). Many modern scholars have noted parallels between the Mass and the most commonly offered sacrifice of Jesus’ day: the thank-offering (in Hebrew, *todah*). The today was a sacrificial meal of bread and wine, shared with friends, given in thanksgiving for God’s deliverance. The Talmud records the ancient rabbi’s teaching that, when the Messiah has come, “all sacrifices will cease except the *todah* sacrifice. This will never cease in all eternity.” When the Jews translated their Scriptures into Greek, they rendered the word *todah* as *eucharistia*, the word from which we get “Eucharist.”

All of Israel’s traditions of worship were like mighty rivers that flowed into the infinite ocean of adoration that Jesus established for the Church. There they did not vanish, but found completion.

Many years before he became pope, Cardinal Josef Ratzinger wrote of yet another notion from ancient Jewish ritual. *Chaburah* was

the word used to describe the fellowship shared by members of God’s covenant family. They shared *chaburah* with one another. They ate *chaburah* meals together. On the eve of a Sabbath or holy day, a rabbi would customarily share such a supper with his disciples. When Jews translated the word into Greek, they rendered it as *koinonia*, communion. The divine covenant brought about powerful fellowship among the people of God.

But the Jews stopped short of describing any *chaburah* between God and human beings. They believed such communion to be impossible. The very idea would be an affront to God’s transcendence. God, after all, is infinite, perfect, and all-good. We are finite, imperfect, and sinful. How could two parties so vastly different enjoy communion with one another, when one party was so clearly unworthy?

God himself disregarded the threat of defilement; and by means of the new covenant, he himself established communion with his people: all of us in the Church, and each of us in the Church. This may be why the language of “covenant,” which is everywhere in the Old Testament, appears rarely in the New Testament; it is replaced by the language of communion. The Mass, said Jesus, “is the new covenant in my blood” (1 Cor 11:25); but now in this *New Covenant*, he has raised the stakes. he has given the Mass as “a communion [*koinonia*] in the blood of Christ” (1 Cor 10:16).

The apostles made clear that Jesus’ salvation had shattered not only the boundaries between Israel and the nations, but also between God and the world. Yes, fellowship was now possible among all peoples, both Jews and Gentiles. God’s family would at last be universal.

Now, too, God himself would share communion with his people. Our life in Christ is our sharing, our participation, our communion in God’s life. It is, at last, *chaburah* between God and mankind.

Ancient Israel had always considered its earthly liturgy to be divinely inspired imitation of heavenly worship. What the priests did in the Temple was an earthly imitation of what the angels did in heaven. Yet it was still only an imitation, only a *shadow*.

By assuming human flesh, the eternal Son of God brought heaven to earth. No longer must the people of God worship in imitation of angels. In the liturgy of the new covenant, Christ himself presides, and we not only imitate the angels; we participate with them. Through the Mass — and in every Mass — there is *communion* between heaven and earth.

We can see that reality most vividly in the book of Revelation, where the Church on earth gathers at the altar with the angels and saints in heaven . . . where we hear the “Holy, Holy, Holy,” the “Lamb of God,” the Amen

and Alleluia and other familiar song . . . where priests serve in vestments in a sanctuary adorned with candles . . . where chalices are poured out and worshippers feast on “hidden manna.” It is, I believe, no accident that the Apocalypse divides nearly into two halves, the first consisting of readings and the second of the “marriage supper of the Lamb.” This structure corresponds to the most ancient order of divine worship.

For Christian liturgy still follows the basic pattern of Old Testament worship: a service that includes both the reading of the Word of God and the offering of sacrifice. Jesus himself followed that outline when he appeared to his disciples on the road to Emmaus: “Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself”; and then they knew him “in the breaking of the bread” (Lk 24:27, 35). In the Mass, we still hear the New Testament readings along with the Old Testament, and we view all the history of salvation in light of its ultimate fulfillment — in light of Christ. In the Mass, we still know Jesus, really present, in the breaking of the bread.

The New Covenant is indeed something new, great, and glorious. yet we should not forget its continuity with the past. Israel’s ritual worship was ordered to covenant remembrance (in reading) and renewal (in sacrifice). Christian worship, too, is a remembrance of God’s mighty works in history, especially Jesus’ saving passion and glorification. The Christian Eucharist remains both a covenant renewal and a thanksgiving for God’s continued presence among his people.

Now that presence is true communion. This fact astonished the early Christians, who proclaimed that the Mass was heaven on earth, and the earthly altar was the same as the heavenly. The Mass is the coming of Christ we all await. God comes to us in true communion, and the “marvelous exchange” takes on a flesh-and-blood dimension. We are God’s children now, and “the children share in flesh and blood” (Heb 2:14).

This does not mean that the parishioners will remind us of Raphael’s cherubs. Sometimes they’ll have screaming babies with pungent diapers. It does not mean that the choir at St. Dymphna’s Parish will ever sing on key. Nor does it mean that Father’s preaching will be consistently compelling.

It means what the incarnation has always meant: “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn 1:14) . . . He “emptied himself” and “humbled himself” (Phil 2:7–8) . . . “the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them” (Rev 21:3).

In the Mass, he is “God with us” (Mt 1:23) where we are, as we are, though he loves us too much to leave us that way. Through the Eucharist, he makes us what he is; where he is he transforms us from glory to glory.

*Excerpted from Signs of Life by Scott Hahn.*