

ASSUMPTION

of the Blessed Virgin Mary

PARISH

MAKING TIME FOR *the Joy of the Eucharistic*

The Eucharist is the source and summit of all Christian Life (Lumen Gentium, 11). When reading about the Eucharist you will find this statement constantly in the description of the sacrament. Sometimes people will ask what about the sacrament of Baptism, the first of the sacraments of initiation, why is the Eucharist considered more important? And the answer is because of what the Eucharist is, the real presence of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Of course all other sacraments find their source in the Eucharist since it is Jesus Christ in the truest and fullest sense that we can consider.

When we celebrate Mass, Jesus transforms the bread and wine that we bring to the altar and offer to God into His Body and Blood through the priest's words and actions. He then asks each of us individually to receive Him and to be united to Him and to one another through this sacrament. There is no greater way that we could be united to Christ than through this sacrifice He has made, and continues to make for us.

In some ways this challenge to understand the Eucharist is very similar in the challenge to understand Christ Himself. How He could be both God and man at the same time. When He again takes physical nature in the bread and wine that we offer and He makes into His Body and Blood it isn't just the miracle of what looks like this bread and wine have become body and blood because it is Christ's Body and Blood. This is again God accepting this physical, limited nature so that we can be fully present to Him and He to us in the Eucharist. Through the history of the Church we have always recognized that it is Christ's real presence in the Eucharist.



"There is no greater way that we could be united to Christ than through this sacrifice He has made, and continues to make for us."

~Fr. Nick

This is probably most obvious in the different ways people have approached the Eucharist at times, not with the question of whether It is truly Christ present or not, but rather since It is Christ, should we desire to just constantly receive Him or should we refrain from receiving Him because we are not worthy?

Summer 2022

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NEW APPRECIATION FOR THE EUCHARIST

We definitely missed the Eucharist during Covid

Like so many families, Assumption parishioners Mike and Danielle Lifritz found a new appreciation for the Eucharist during COVID. The Lifritzes have been parishioners for 24 years, and 22 years ago, they were married in the Chapel. When the Archdiocese closed all Catholic churches for a few months due to COVID-19, Mike and Danielle experienced the loss of the Body of Christ – both in the Eucharist and in the community that is Assumption.

“We definitely missed the Eucharist during COVID,” Danielle said. “We sat together as a family to watch the live-streamed Mass, and Mike would get on me and say, ‘You cannot drink your coffee during Mass.’”

After parishioners were allowed to attend Mass in person, Danielle was still struck by the sense of loss.

“It didn’t feel the same,” she said. “Going to church means receiving the Eucharist each week and coming together as a community. As things started really opening back up and we could be close to family and friends, it was much better.”

“COVID really made me realize how much the community meant to us and going to the Eucharistic celebration with our family and friends,” Mike added. “I took part in Exodus 90, and that got me going to Adoration on a more regular basis.”

Danielle is grateful that Assumption makes Adoration available any time of day.

“The Chapel is special to me, because that’s where we were married,” she said. “I’ve been to Adoration by myself and with Mike. It’s a beautiful thing to have in the parish.”

Mike said he sometimes enters the Chapel being wound up from the day, carrying the stress and anxiety with him. Being there, however, is a remedy like no other.



The Lifritz Family: Mike, Danielle, Lizzie and Michael

"Going to church means receiving the Eucharist each week and coming together as a community."

Sitting with Christ, listening to the creeks and groans of the Chapel...it all works together to bring a sense of peace.

On one occasion, he invited his daughter, Lizzie, to go to Adoration. “I didn’t think she’d go, but she said she wanted to,” Mike remembered. “She grabbed a bear that is made from my grandpa’s shirts and she brought a journal, too. That was a neat experience to be able to share with her.”

Lizzie, now 12, has joyful memories of the Eucharist. She attends Assumption School with her brother, Michael, 5.

“I started really learning about the Eucharist in the second and third grade,” she said. “I knew it was the Body of Christ, but I didn’t really understand it.”

“One time, when she was about Michael’s age, she saw our friend, Bob (Hackman), go to his station as a Eucharistic minister,” Danielle said. “Lizzie said, ‘Oh look! Bob is handing out snacks.’”

Danielle credits the leadership and staff at Assumption School for jumping in and finding a way to keep the kids in school during COVID, even if they could not physically receive the Body of Christ.

“They figured it out pretty quickly, and did a great job,” she said. “And all that time, Lizzie was able to watch daily Mass with her classmates and continue to learn. They were able to maintain that sense of community for the kids.”

This community, called to be the body of Christ, helped each other and held each other up until we could come together to receive the Body of Christ in the Eucharist.

JESUS IS HERE

Through it all, Christ was there

Through it all, Christ was there.

The Gervais family – Brandon and Celie, and their children Holden (4) and Magdalena (18 months) – has a special connection to the Eucharist. Assumption parishioners for six years, Brandon and Celie have experienced joy, devastation, community and peace in their married lives, and through it all, Christ was there.

Brandon and Celie have each participated in a Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP) retreat, and credit that ministry with giving them a strong connection to Assumption and its parishioners. Finding Christ at Assumption helped the family strengthen their Catholic foundation, which was pivotal when they were faced with shattering news in October 2019.

“Celie and I received devastating news at our 20-week ultrasound that our baby, Zélie Faustina, had a fetal fatal diagnosis of Thanatophoric Dysplasia,” Brandon said. “(This) allowed Celie to carry her through birth, but her life expectancy after birth was limited.”

It was soon after, during Advent, that Brandon grew in appreciation of the season of waiting, and he made the commitment to attend daily Mass.



“It was through that experience I realized how much strength could be received from frequenting the sacrament of Communion,” he said. Celie agreed.

“Frequent reception of the Eucharist as well as sitting in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament during Adoration has helped so much to sustain me and give me the strength to keep going during some of my hardest days, including the birth and death of our daughter,” she said.

“Often I would pray ‘Jesus, be my peace,’ before receiving the Eucharist, especially on days when the grief hit a little harder. After receiving the Body of Christ, I would literally feel His presence within me. (It was) a peace that only Jesus can provide.”

Adoration is, for Celie, a time to be alone with Christ. When she attends daily Mass with one or both of the kids, Celie stops in the chapel to spend a few minutes in front of the Blessed Sacrament before going to Mass.

“It helps prepare my heart to receive Jesus in the Eucharist,” she said. “My hope is that it will eventually help our very busy 4-year-old to settle down for Mass and learn the reverence we should have walking in for Adoration or Mass.”

And in the “Out of the mouths of babes” category, young Holden gets it.

“The most impactful thing we’ve been able to do is frequenting Mass,” Brandon said. “There was a time when Holden was about 2, that when he’d hear the bells rung at Mass he’d say, in his best two-year-old whisper, ‘Jesus is here.’ Sometimes it was quieter than others and sometimes we were embarrassed about how loud it was, but we knew that he was starting to understand the importance of why we were at Mass.”

“The most impactful thing we’ve been able to do is frequenting Mass. There was a time when Holden was about 2, that he’d hear the bells rung at Mass he’d say, in his best whisper, ‘Jesus is here.’” - Brandon Gervias

THE BODY OF CHRIST DRIVES OUR FAITH

Marriage of Faith

The Body of Christ Drives their Faith

Ryan and Liz Crowley began their lives together, their “marriage of faith,” as Liz put it, at Assumption in 2010. That strong foundation grew as the couple welcomed two children – Ellie, now 9, and Emmett, now 6. Both children were baptized at Assumption, and Ellie received her First Holy Communion here. Assumption is home.

Like many Assumption parishioners, Liz and Ryan credit a Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP) retreat with helping her feel at home at Assumption.

“My faith grew even stronger as I participated and then helped facilitate a CRHP experience,” Liz said. “We feel like we have become a part of the parish community. We attend weekly Mass, and our daughter attends the Parish School of Religion (PSR) program and our son will start in the fall.”

Faith education, of course, begins at home. Liz and Ryan take that commitment to heart and talk with their children about the Eucharist.

“We have had many conversations with Ellie about the Eucharist before she received her First Holy Communion,” Ryan said.



“We also had many lessons around the kitchen table with (Eucharist) as the focus when we had home school PSR. As our children continue to grow, so does their faith.”

Liz likens each encounter with Christ in the Eucharist as another layer for her children’s faith foundation. When COVID closed the physical church building, the Crowley family attended Mass virtually.

“COVID definitely gave us a deeper appreciation for the body of Christ,” she said. “Months of virtual Mass without communion allowed us to truly appreciate the blessings we have here at Assumption. The Eucharist, as well as the parish community, are aspects we are lucky to embrace as a family which may have impacted us negatively at the time but reinforced our love for the church and our fellow parishioners.”

Liz added that the Eucharist is very important and being able to attend weekly Mass as a family to receive the Body of Christ drives their faith, providing “many blessed memories that we will always cherish.”

“We also had many lessons around the kitchen table with (Eucharist) as the focus when we had home school PSR. As our children continue to grow, so does their faith.” - Ryan Crowley

MAKING TIME FOR

the Joy of the Eucharistic (continued)

The emphasis on our not being worthy to receive the Eucharist has led to such practices as a 2nd grade girls First Communion dress looking like a wedding dress because they received the Eucharist so rarely that the second time she might receive Communion may not be until her wedding day. And the necessity to make a canon law that while we are obligated to participate in Mass every Sunday (can. 1247), we are only required to receive Communion once a year (can. 920). I have also been told about practices to the other extreme that used to exist at some parishes where they would just distribute Communion to people immediately before Mass because they were unable to stay for the entire daily Mass but desired to receive Communion daily.

We believe the Eucharist is meant to be received as a part of the entire celebration of the Eucharist at Mass that we are to participate in. Unfortunately, some historical practices, along with the one mentioned above, have also taken away from this at times. I've recently read of the example where prior to Vatican II some places had the practice of a "Communion Mass" early Sunday morning where the people would participate, then go home to have breakfast, and return for the High Mass where the congregation did not receive Communion.

This might have served some practical purposes since there was a requirement to fast from midnight until the reception of the Eucharist,



but it definitely seems to be missing some of the understanding of participating in this sacrificial meal that we celebrate with Christ.

Many faithful people cannot be physically present for valid reasons at times such as health reasons, particularly over the last two years with COVID which involved even some prohibitions from gathering physically together. Fortunately, many have been able to use the internet to live-stream the Mass to pray together even when we are required to be physically separated. I've even heard the phrase used to describe this as someone didn't make it to Mass last week, but they did participate at 'Our Lady of the Couch'. I thought that was actually a clever way of stating what had happened, but unfortunately this practice might also lead to greater misunderstandings of the importance of the Mass and Christ's presence in the Eucharist.

I know that I have been at celebrations with other Christian faiths for their Sunday service where the structure of the service may be very similar, and they do share hosts and wine, but it is not the same. They have the unity of the community that is gathered together as we do, and for the cause of honoring and worshiping God, and even listening to God's words from Scripture. But He is not present there in the way He is at the Mass. A crude comparison could be the difference between going to a concert by your favorite artist or band, vs. gathering to listen to a recording they made. The sound and production might actually be better, but it is not the same, it is not live, there is no presence.

When we gather to celebrate the Eucharist we hope that we all fully participate. That our words, our actions, our music, and our prayer may all help to unite us in our worship as a congregation and with the entire Church. Our gathering as a community is important. But it is most important that we are all gathering with Christ, where He becomes truly, really, physically present with us in the celebration of the Mass. Where we not only find Christ here, but we fully receive Him in the Eucharist, so we may bring Him to the world.

"That our words, our actions, our music, and our prayer may all help to unite us in our worship as a congregation and with the entire Church." – Fr. Nick Kastenholz

STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

Giving during the Summer months

“We’ve stopped delivery of the newspaper and mail. We’ve taken the dog to the kennel.

The iron is unplugged, and the stove is turned off. Is there anything else we need to do before we leave on vacation?”

Aren’t you forgetting something? Did you remember to write a check to your parish for the Sundays you’ll be gone?

“But I won’t be at Mass at home those Sundays. Can’t I skip those envelopes when I’m away? After all, I’ll put a dollar or two, or maybe even five, in the collection at the church where we visit. Isn’t that enough?”

Many Americans, whether we have school-aged children at home or not, mentally operate on an academic calendar. We assume our organizations operate September through May and then take it easy during June, July and August. And to some extent, many parish activities do function on such a schedule. Our parish may not hold Religious Education classes during the summer. Our choirs frequently take a break. Even many of the parish staff members take summer vacations! Can’t our giving take a vacation during the summer, too?

Even as we form the question in our mind, we know the answer.

The prime reason for keeping up our pledge all summer long is that God doesn’t go on vacation. He continues to sustain us throughout the summer months. He persists in pouring out blessings on us, even during the hottest weather. He keeps on meeting us in His sacramental presence when we go to Mass wherever we travel. As God remains faithful to us during the summer, we are called to be faithful in our commitments to Him and our parish family, even during our vacation time.

God’s steadfastness in giving to us is the primary reason for us to respond by being faithful in our stewardship toward Him. But there is also a practical reason why we need to keep up our pledges of time, talent and treasure throughout the summer – the Church needs our involvement year-round.

Even though some parish activities are reduced during the summer months, the parish’s expenses are not. After all, there are still Sunday Masses and weekday Masses, too. The parish staff members still need their salaries. And of course, we need to run the air conditioning in our church during the hot summer months. Despite the fact that some parish functions are suspended, other activities may take place, such as Vacation Bible School. And although the regular parish Religious Education program may be suspended, the summer expenses are often the highest, as textbooks and other supplies are bought for the upcoming school year.

Our parish has to pay its bills on a year-round basis, just like your family. Our parish plans a budget for the year, taking into account the commitments that you, the members, have made. If parishioners do not live out their financial commitments to the parish, the budget will not balance.

Our giving needs to be maintained throughout the summer, just as God maintains His generosity to us. Our stewardship is a response to God’s gifts. And God pours out His gifts and His grace upon us all year long.

Our Stewardship of Treasure is a response to God's gifts.

*"Oh holy Eucharist upon the altar, In your presence, I
delight, The paschal lamb and perfect victor,
Winning souls with love and light. Tell me Lord, here I
wait, Tell me what you want from me,
My heart is listening for your words,
Since you set my spirit free."*



The lines above come from a much larger poem, written by a very good friend of mine. They are but two of a total of twenty stanzas, all flowing with a harmony of rhyme, meter, insights and passion that left me wondering how they came to be written. When asked, my friend would not condone being afforded any credit, saying simply that they were written,

if memory serves – at one sitting, in His Presence. Her thoughts and writing, she said with a confidence that left no doubt in the listener, were guided by the One to whom they were addressed. I got to know my friend, Letty, and another genial soul, Mary Beth,

because they had the 5:00 a.m. hour at an Adoration chapel in Mundelein, Illinois, where I first began my encounters with The Real Presence more than twelve years ago. I had the prior hour on those Saturday mornings. After some weeks, or perhaps months, we would share some words and some parts of our own stories.

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"Her thoughts and writing, she said with a confidence that left no doubt in the listener, were guided by the One to whom they were addressed." - Ray Gerard

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I have gotten to know a good number of people since, in this same way. They are memories now, and the memories continue to grow. I am reminded of some of them by a framed collage of photographs that hangs in my home office. It was a gift from some men in my parish from that time in Illinois. The photos are of that Adoration chapel, called Marytown. (Perhaps it is no coincidence that I am now at a parish also devoted to Our Lady.)

Wherever we have lived since, I have continued with Adoration. I cannot conceive of life without it now, though I resisted even starting it at first. There is a reason for this. He is the reason. He is there.

*"There is a reason for this. He is the
reason. He is there."*

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday: 8:00 a.m. Chapel (during summer months) | **Sunday:** Vigil Mass 5:00 p.m., 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m.,
Noon **Daily Mass:** Monday – Friday: 6:30 a.m. & 8:00 a.m. in the Chapel (during the summer months)
Eucharistic Adoration: Tuesdays after the 8:00am Mass until 6:00 p.m.
Reconciliation: Weekdays: 7:30 a.m. & Saturday 4:00-4:45 p.m. in the Church