

General Audience (continued):

but that we can also be the ones who gather it, protect it and renew it. Ultimately, this is hope: knowing that even if we fail, God will never fail us. Even if we betray him, he never stops loving us. And if we allow ourselves to be touched by this love – humble, wounded, but always faithful – then we can truly be reborn. And we can begin to live no longer as traitors, but as children who are always loved.

JUBILEE PILGRIMAGE - Our next Parish pilgrimage is scheduled for Sunday, August 24th at Our Lady of Victory in State College. Mass is scheduled at 11:00 AM. The departure time for those wishing to carpool is at 8:50 AM. Please meet in the rectory parking lot. We will be stopping to eat after Mass.

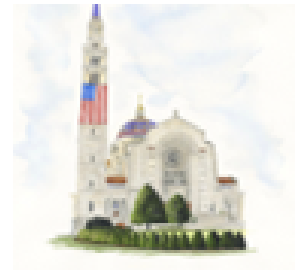
Ice Cream Crawl Update – On Sunday, September 7th, 2025, we will have our last ice cream social of the year, and it will be in the school cafeteria starting at 7PM. Anyone interested in going is asked to bring a half gallon of their favorite flavor and topping to share. Sign up sheets will be in the vestibule to sign up and list the flavor you are bringing and topping.

Mums Sale – From August 10th until September 2nd, we will be selling coupons for mums from Fosbrink's Four Seasons on Goucher Street. The coupons are redeemable from September 9th until September 13th, and their hours are from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. These times are reserved for Visitation Parish pick-ups. There will be three different coupons: a 9" pot is \$10.00, a pumpkin pot (which has a metal pumpkin, scarecrow, etc. in the pot) is \$9.00 and a porch planter for \$25.00. Please help support Visitation Parish in this new fundraiser with Fosbrink's Four Seasons.

SIXTH WEEK— BUSES ARE FILLING UP QUICKLY

Pilgrimage to Washington, DC

Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception - October 17, 2025.



Important Notice: We are taking reservations for the Buses traveling to Washington DC for the Jubilee 2025 Pilgrimage to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. **The cost of the Bus is \$50.00 per person and includes the tip for the bus driver. The bus will depart at EXACTLY 6:30 AM from the HOME DEPOT parking lot, Galleria Extension Drive in Johnstown. Payment is due no later than September 15th, 2025.**

ONLY 3 BUSES with 150 SEATS are available. We currently have one bus filled up and there are 55 seats left!

Reservations will be taken on a first come first serve basis. To reserve a seat (s) and make payment to Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, please call Catherine Bennett, Secretary at 814-536-6110, x1, Monday through Friday from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM.

You are advised to CARPOOL to the HOME DEPOT because of limited parking.

More information and an itinerary for the day will be distributed closer to the event.

Please call as soon as possible because seats will fill up fast and these are the only buses reserved for the Johnstown area.

From the Pastor's Desk

I am writing this piece very early on Friday morning since sleep did not sit well with me last evening. I am very happy to report on the attendance and participation at the vigil for the holy day (the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary) last evening (Thursday). There were 92 persons at attendance at Mass; the largest crowd at a vigil for a Holy Day of Obligation since the onset of COVID-19. I am so very pleased that our parish took seriously the Church's desire to celebrate Mary's Assumption, body and soul into heavenly glory at the end of the course of her earthly life. It is a sign that we believe that her destiny will be ours if we attempt to live a life like hers – one that points continually to Christ in our words and deeds that embody the gospel message.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all of you that I am more than happy to talk with you about any of your needs, concerns, difficulties, suggestions – or, if you merely want to chat. All that you need to do is either approach me after Mass or call the rectory to make an appointment (usually, it is somewhat difficult to talk immediately following Mass given the circumstances). When calling, it is usually best to speak with me directly or leave a message rather than try to make an appointment. The only request that I do make is not to approach me before Mass with a problem or concern unless it is urgent and it is related directly to the celebration of Mass that day. As a priest, it is important for me to have the time before Mass to prepare mentally and spiritually to celebrate the sacred mysteries. All in all, I do not want anyone to hesitate to approach me. I “hate” when people say, “I know that you are so busy.” Well, the fact of the matter is that I am busy; HOWEVER, part of my business is to be ministering to my people! Know that I welcome every conversation that I have with all of you.

I want to end with a very short reminder about the gospel message. When Jesus speaks about bringing division between members of families in the gospels, he is not speaking of a desire to disrupt the building blocks of society. First, the gospel writer is reflecting upon the circumstances of the day when some families did become divided because of the tension between following Christ and either 1) the inability to reconcile their Jewish beliefs or 2) fear or persecution by the Roman Empire. Second, today, the division that Christ speaks of is not anti-family or anti-community. Rather it is about building a household that is not dominated by social expectations and/or conformity. Instead of allowing others to choose for us, we must choose the “yoke” that brings lightness and joy. Being yoked by Christ, who is perfect and never leaves us, is far better than being yoked to the imperfect and sometimes bullying wills of our neighbors. So, let us seek to create our family in and with Christ.