

From the Pastor's Desk

Grace, peace, and joy to all my dear friends of Visitation Parish. Although I did not have the privilege of celebrating Eucharist with you this weekend, I assure you that I was with you in spirit. I remembered all of you as I celebrated the Most Holy Mysteries in my home during the past week and over the past weekend. I am most grateful for Fr. Code for presiding at the weekend Masses over the last three weekends during my extended illness and recovery period. He is a true friend and a wonderful priest. May God bless him for his service to me and to our community.

As always, I want to set the record straight as to my most recent hospital stay, seeing that a fanciful tale can easily take form without the appropriate communication of facts. To be honest, the most recent event was rather horrible and I do not wish to spend a great deal of time and detail giving a blow by blow account of what were perhaps some of the most frightening days of my adult life. Before I begin, I want to let you know that my liver, believe it or not, is absolutely fine, functioning at 100%+ capacity (if that is even possible) and did so over the course of my illness. The problem resulted from the fact that because I am on anti-rejection medication for my liver transplant, I necessarily am plagued by a weakened immune system. As a result of that, and the lack of sufficient recovery time from my recent hernia repair, I developed bi-literate aspirational pneumonia in my lower lungs and a dangerous type of fungal pneumonia in my upper lungs (which incidentally requires me to be on medication for the next two months). In addition, my kidneys were severely compromised during the event. In any case, I was unable to breath at all without oxygen and required a feeding tube for several days, and to be honest, things did not look very hopeful during that time. But the good news is that through the grace of God I was able to pull through and make a rather remarkable recovery (I paraphrase my physicians) and continue to do VERY well as I am recuperating through Wednesday of this week in the rectory. I can assure you of several things. First, I would never have been able to survive if it were not for your prayerful support of me. Second, while I have been doing some light administrative work during my recovery period, I plan to be back "full swing" next weekend. You have no idea how much I miss being with you during extended periods of absence such as these. My we all praise our Lord Jesus Christ, his most Blessed Mother Mary, and the entire communion of saints for the many blessings extended to me and to all of us during this period.

Although there is both an article in the regular bulletin as well as an insert this weekend that refers to our participation in the Annual Johnstown Ethnic Fest, I do want to underscore how important it is for all of us to

participate in this fundraising event. As we know by Gospel mandate, all of us are allotted many gifts, talents, and abilities by God. For some of us that may allow us to come forward to volunteer our time to work by making Jello shots, working one of the shifts at our booth and the like. For others it may be going to the store and purchasing Jello, spirits, or other items that are required for the success of our booth. If we cannot afford the time to actively “do” something, perhaps the Lord has given us the means to contribute something to our one of four annual second collections to assure some participation in the event. We must realize that the financial solvency of our parish is everyone’s responsibility. Again, I remind you that I myself donate to the event, seeing that I have no expectation upon anyone that I do not place upon myself. Thank you for being a responsible member of our parish by participating whatever form that the Lord is calling you to do so.

One final note that I want to offer is that I am seriously considering offering a third opportunity for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament during the week. I feel that we as we continue to move forward with the many successes and challenges that we have faced over the past of the last year, that the Lord is calling us **as a community of faith** to an ever-deeper faith in the most Holy Sacrament of His Body and Blood. Along side this I would love to see a greater participation in daily Mass. While I certainly understand that many people work during the day, perhaps if you have a significant lunch break or if you are retired, perhaps you might consider giving a half an hour or two a week to our Lord and join us for Mass at 12:05 PM Monday through Friday. All I ask is that we all remember the good the Lord shows to us on a regular basis and that if we have the opportunity to thank Him for it, we should make the most of it.

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

This Friday, August 15th is the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, when the universal Church celebrated that at the course of the end of her earthly life, that Mary the Mother of the Lord was assumed into heavenly glory. This is a tremendous feast for it is a foretaste of our eternal destiny through redemption in Christ. The Assumption is a **HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION**. This means that all Catholics are required to participate in the celebration of mass that day (on its vigil). As in the past, I remind all that joining in the celebration of Mass that day carries the same moral weight as the normal Sunday obligation. Please be certain to mark your calendars.

