

From Pontiff to Pew:

action is at once “internal” and “external”.

This also means that it is called to unfold in a tangible way throughout daily life, in an ethical and spiritual dynamic, so that the liturgy celebrated is translated into life and demands a faithful existence, capable of making concrete what has been experienced in the celebration: it is in this way that our life becomes a “living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God”, fulfilling our “spiritual worship” (Rom 12:1).

In this way, “the liturgy daily builds up those who are within into a holy temple of the Lord” (SC, 2), and forms an open community, welcoming to all. Indeed, it is inhabited by the Holy Spirit, it introduces us into the life of Christ, it makes us His Body and, in all its dimensions, it represents a sign of the unity of the entire human race in Christ. As Pope Francis said, “the world still does not know it, but everyone is invited to the supper of the wedding of the Lamb (Rev 19:9)” (Apostolic Letter *Desiderio desideravi*, 5).

Dear friends, let us allow ourselves to be shaped inwardly by the rites, symbols, gestures and above all the living presence of Christ in the liturgy, which we will have the opportunity to explore in the coming Catecheses.

From the Pastor’s Desk

God’s blessing to all of you, my dearest friends. This week was very helpful for me, that I was able to get away for three days to go to my old stomping grounds (for 4 years) Baltimore, Maryland and Washington, D.C. During that time, I was able to visit the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and Catholic University of America where I taught for three years in Washington D.C. and the Cathedral of Mary our Queen in Baltimore, Marland as well as Saint Mary’s Seminary and University where I also taught for four years. It brought back many good memories for me and helped me to connect as I attempt to piece together the narrative of my life as I reflect and pray during these years of middle age. I also had the opportunity to eat some very fine meals in Baltimore and its environs, in particular little Italy in Baltimore and a wonderful restaurant named Costas which has outstanding crab cakes, just 10 miles outside of the city. I needed to depend upon my rollator to walk

frequently, however, as I said it was good to away to clear my mind (outside of a hospital setting).

I told you that I was going to update you a bit more with regard to my health, so if I am repeating myself just a bit from a few weeks ago, please bear with me, I just want to provide you with as much information as possible so as to avoid rumors and gossip (which unfortunately have already happened). In any case, one of the most pressing issues is my need for a kidney transplant. Before any of that can happen I need to have two issues resolved. First, I have an issue with silent aspiration when I drink any fluids. I have been working with speech therapy to try to strengthen the muscles that control swallowing; however, I can assure you that they are rather difficult. I have the option of thickening liquids, but to be quite candid it is rather gross and I only engage in that practice from time to time. Please pray that I am able to resolve this issue because it is a determining factor as to my transplant because of my need to be on a ventilator for a few days following the transplant. In addition, I most likely have an issue with gastroparesis (a condition in which the muscles in the stomach don't move food as they should for it to be digested). For me, it takes about 36 hours to fully digest a meal). In any case, that means that if I were to lay flat in the bed too early after I eat I could aspirate the food in my stomach (which I have, and has been the cause of the four pneumonias that I have had to undergo this year). Since this last stay in the hospital, I have had to sleep in a recliner which is old and uncomfortable, which I am in the process of trying to replace. What an ordeal.

In terms of my ambulation, I began intensive physical therapy this week. My evaluation...I am quite a mess because my muscles have atrophied due to the lack of proper physical therapy while I was hospitalized. The prognosis, after months of physical therapy I should be able to walk well again, but it will be quite an effort. I am very dedicated to returning to normalcy, so I can assure you I will be giving therapy my all. The pain that I am experiencing in the lower half of my body, hips, legs, knees, ankles, and feet are all exacerbated by osteoarthritis and gout and are "managed" by two pain medications (and when I say managed I DO NOT mean relieved.)

Needless to say, I am currently being seen by almost a dozen doctors on a regular basis. Including co-pays, certain medications, and other expenditures that are not covered by insurance, my health care has become

VERY expensive. I have always said, I don't need much to live on, well, now I am living on much less. I suppose it is a blessing to struggle knowing that so many other Americans struggle with health care and the economy in today's world. I pray that God will continue to provide all of us with the support that we need.

All of this has been very difficult for me in any of a number of ways as you can imagine; however, I want you to know that I thank God every day that I am able to get up, face the day, and do so the majority of times with gladness. So many people suffer so much more than I do, so I am greatly blessed. What I ask of you is support, any that you can provide me, especially with regard to prayer. I would not make it day after day without the prayers that place me in the hands of almighty God, who I know is caring for me ("Cast your care upon the Lord and he will care for you" - 1 Peter 5:7). I want to thank you for your generosity to me to this point and humbly ask you to continue to think of me, especially prayerfully.

In any case, as always I want you to know that I place all of you and your intentions before the Lord in prayer each day. As you know, I maintain a full work schedule in spite of everything, so please, if a need arises, please do not hesitate to call. Now that I am not teaching, I have more time for appointments so if you need to speak with me, please be certain to call upon me if you need me. I am also very grateful to maintain a regular mass schedule for the most part. Please be certain to check the Mass schedule in the bulletin on a regular basis for any changes. So for now, God bless and be well. I love you all very dearly and appreciate the love and kindness that you continue to demonstrate toward me.

Diocesan 125 Anniversary Celebration

NEXT SUNDAY, *Sunday, May 31, 2026*, the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown will mark its **125th**

Anniversary with a special liturgy (celebration of Eucharist) celebrated at 2:00 PM in the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament. **This will be one of the largest celebrations in our diocese's history** for it will be



attended by the Apostolic Pro Nuncio (or his delegate) our Metropolitan Archbishop, 4-5 other bishops from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as well as several other religious and political dignitaries. All members of the diocese are encouraged to attend. Some members of our parish have expressed an interest in attending. Therefore, if you are interested either sign the signup sheet in the main vestibule of the Church or call the rectory by Wednesday, May 27 by the end of the business day. It would be lovely if we could get a carpool together.

Congratulations - Celebration - Save the Date

To ALL the members of Visitation Parish,

On Monday, May 11, 2026, Fr. John celebrated his 30-year anniversary of priestly ordination. What a tremendous life of service that he has offered to the Church, and for 12 of those years we have been privileged to have Fr. John serving as the pastor of our parish. Most priests have a huge celebration to mark their 25th anniversary; however, Fr. John did not because of the proximity to the Covid-19 outbreak and the need for him to stay healthy in light of an upcoming liver transplant (which actually did not occur until several years afterward). In any case, **we the parish would like to mark the celebration of his 30th anniversary with a party on Saturday, July 18th with a formal dinner here in the parish gymnasium, following the 5:00 PM Saturday Vigil Mass.** Please mark your calendar and save the date. We would love to see our entire parish family gather for this milestone event marking a life of dedicated service to God, the Church, and our parish family.

Novena in Honor of Our Lady of the Visitation

Most Blessed Virgin Mary, who upon hearing the wondrous news of your divine motherhood, set out in haste to visit your cousin Elizabeth, we come before you today seeking your powerful intercession.

O Mother of God, during your Visitation, you carried the Son of God in your womb, bringing Christ physically to Elizabeth's home. At the sound of your greeting, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and the infant John leaped for joy in her womb, recognizing the presence of his Lord.

In that sacred moment, moved by the Holy Spirit, you proclaimed your Magnificat, praising God for His marvelous works and proclaiming His mercy from generation to generation. Your soul magnified the Lord, and your spirit rejoiced in God your Savior.

We ask you, dear Mother, to visit us as you visited Elizabeth. Bring Jesus to us and help us recognize His presence in our lives. Pray for the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts so that we, like John, might leap with joy at Christ's coming. Inspire us to serve others with your same humility and love.

O humble Handmaid of the Lord, teach us to respond generously to God's will, to journey in faith despite difficulties, to bring Christ to others through our words and actions, and to wait patiently and hopefully for the fulfillment of God's promises.

Here we pause to present our special intentions for this novena...

Mary, Mother of God and our Mother, continue your visitation in the Church and in our world. Obtain healing for the sick, comfort for the sorrowful, hope for the discouraged, and peace for the troubled. Visit our families with your Son's love and transform our hearts to more closely resemble your own Immaculate Heart.

We thank you for your maternal care and protection. Help us to proclaim with you that the Almighty has done great things for us, and holy is His Name.

Through your powerful intercession, may we receive the graces we seek during this novena, if they be in accordance with God's will. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Then Pray:

Our Father (3 times), Hail Mary (3 times), Glory be (3 times)

As this is a novena, these prayers are to be prayed for nine (9) days.

We will be having a second collection next weekend to help offset some of the costs associated with our Music Bingo fundraiser. If you are not able to support us in any other way, giving as your means allow would be greatly appreciated.