

ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – JULY 29, 2018

Dear Families and Parishioners,

We have recently completed the July Family Festival, three days of physical enjoyment, community outreach, and parish companionship. This was most successful on all fronts. We now approach the August Family Festival, three days of spiritual opportunity, sacramental grace, and expressions of our Catholic Faith. These days are the **Assumption Triduum**, August 13th, 14th, and 15th.

These three days focus on the Seven Sacraments that form the beating heart of Catholic and Orthodox worship. The sacraments are the acts of Faith in which we recognize simple outward signs of the invisible presence of God in our life.

The first day of our Triduum begins on Monday at 6:30 PM. We begin in the church with the first part of our Liturgy, a Communal Penance Service. We come together as a community recognizing corporately our failures and individually for those who wish the Sacrament of I'm Sorry. **This is an especially good time for parents to bring the Confirmandi to receive the Sacrament of Penance.**

This first part of our Liturgy concludes as we process out of the church to the Grotto of Mary where we shall read the Gospel of the day and proceed further into the Sacrament of the Eucharist. All the Seven Sacraments are a special bonding of God with us, but the Eucharist is the fullness of the Sacramental life because Jesus himself comes within us as the Resurrected Lord.

Every Sacrament is an act of faith because God is not seen with our visible eyes but rather believed with the eyes of faith. Participation in the sacraments enlivens our faith and keeps vital the heritage we have received from our ancestors. Those who abandon the sacraments tend to drift. Those who participate actively in the sacraments, climb steadily up the Mountain of God toward the Kingdom of Heaven.

The service on Tuesday follows the pattern of Monday. However, in place of the opening Liturgy being the Sacrament of Penance, Tuesday begins with the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. This Sacrament of the Sick is meant not only for those who are physically ill and aging, but also for those who are troubled interiorly and downcast. **Our community comes together praying for all in our parish** and inviting anointing for those who wish to receive the sacrament for the ill and the struggling. While not everyone will wish to receive the sacrament, we all can pray together for those in our parish who find themselves struggling.

Following the Anointing we will again process in song out of the church to the Altar of Sacrifice in the Grotto where Jesus will be made especially present by the invocation of the priest asking the Holy Spirit to descend upon the gifts (*epiclesis*) and then the words of Consecration. This is again a deep act of faith for all. Finally, Communion is distributed. Each evening following this Liturgy there is a processional rosary as people circle the Stations of the Cross.

Finally, on the Feast of the Assumption, Wednesday, August 15th, Liturgy will begin at 7:00 PM in the Grotto. **I strongly encourage the entire parish as we did for the festival in July to join this spiritual festival that will enliven our faith and support all of our parishioners in the heritage we have received from our ancestors.**

Fr. Tom Acker, S.J.
July 29, 2018