

ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – AUGUST 12, 2018

Dear Families and Parishioners,

The Assumption Triduum beginning on Monday is a sequel to the Family Festival in July. Mary's Assumption Feast brings us this Sacramental Festival. If you came aside and rested a while in July, come aside again for three nights to receive the Bread of Life.

It is fitting that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, invites us into the presence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father chose Mary as a human person to bring Jesus into the world. The Gospels relate that the Holy Spirit came upon Mary and with that action she became the Mother of Jesus. Now, in our day she introduces us to the Triduum of the Assumption and to the Trinity in sacrament.

Pope Francis has perceptively noted that three phrases when repeated can have enormous results. These three phrases are: Thank you, I'm sorry, and May I. I'm sorry is the Sacrament of Confession in action. On Monday night at 6:30 in the church we will have a Communal Sacrament of I'm Sorry. This is a sacrament of God's mercy toward us not an occasion of shame.

This night also has a touch of Confirmation. I have asked the twenty one parents who are leading their children toward Confirmation to come with their children to this sacrament of I'm Sorry and participate. In this way, both the parents and the Confirmandi support one another by this great act of faith.

Following the Communal Confession we march in procession on the new pathway to the Grotto for the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Here we shall receive the Bread of Life that is mentioned so prominently in the Gospel this Sunday. The Bread of Life is Jesus and we are to take him into ourselves. Even as we take bread to grow physically, so we ingest the Bread of Life to grow spiritually.

Tuesday brings us another Sacrament, the Anointing of the Sick. This sacrament is not only for those who have a physical problem but is also intended for people who are distressed in their minds for a whole host of reasons. People go to a counselor when they find themselves weighed down. Likewise you may come to the Anointing of the Sick and ask the Lord to uplift you. In fact, the anointing prayer says exactly this: "May the Lord save you and raise you up." This is an act of faith that this simple anointing brings the Lord to you in a way that he would have comforted Martha and Mary at the loss of Lazarus.

Following the Anointing of the Sick, we then march in song to the Eucharistic Sacrifice in the Grotto of Mary. These days of coming together also exhibit the Sacrament of Matrimony. In the Sacrament of Matrimony individuals begin to form a family and the Lord promises to be part of your family. Many of you come here as family. The Holy Spirit especially through the Sacrament of Confirmation also joins you as an advocate.

Finally, on Wednesday we celebrate the Feast of the Assumption. Mary who is fully one of us has attained the goal which is also the destiny planned by God for each of us. She is the first fully human person to experience the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

Fr. Tom Acker, S.J.
August 12, 2018