

ASSUMPTION

of the
Blessed Virgin Mary
PARISH

MAKING TIME FOR

the Joy of Eucharistic Adoration

When it comes to the three elements of stewardship, time often seems the most difficult to come by. Our lives are so busy and action-packed, making it difficult for us to step away and give quality time to the Lord. This, explains parishioner Rita Phillips, is what makes Eucharistic Adoration so invaluable, in that it provides each one of us with a distraction-free atmosphere to spend focused time with our Lord.

“I so look forward to that time,” Rita says. “It’s my time with God where nobody can interrupt or take me away. And it’s time that you get entirely back in the way that it totally transforms and strengthens your relationship with Christ.”

Rita helped start Eucharistic Adoration here at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary years ago. Originally, adoration was only available on Tuesdays with committed adorers signed up for each hour. However, thanks to Fr. Mitch Doyen’s leadership, we are now blessed to have perpetual Eucharistic Adoration available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Parishioners are now able to come and go as they please, entering into personal prayer and deepening their relationship with our Eucharistic Lord.

“Eucharistic Adoration is your own personal, customized prayer time with God,” Rita says. “It’s your own way of praying. You can just sit there or kneel down, opening your heart to God and asking Him to answer all the prayer and desires of your heart.”

For Rita personally, Eucharistic Adoration brings immense joy and peace to her heart. It rejuvenates her soul and strengthens her for the problems and difficulties of life. Because of this, says Rita, it’s easy to fit adoration into her

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We always find time for the things that are important to us. Making time for our Eucharistic Lord is a concrete way to show our love for Him.

JUNE 2017

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STEWARDSHIP

Giving During the Summer Season

“We’ve stopped delivery of the newspaper and mail. We’ve taken the dog to the kennel. The iron is unplugged, and the stove is turned off. Is there anything else we need to do before we leave on vacation?”

Aren’t you forgetting something? Did you remember to write a check to your parish for the Sundays you’ll be gone?

“But I won’t be at Mass at home those Sundays. Can’t I skip those envelopes when I’m away? After all, I’ll put a dollar or two, or maybe even five, in the collection at the church where we visit. Isn’t that enough?”

Many Americans, whether we have school-aged children at home or not, mentally operate on an academic calendar. We assume our organizations operate September through May and then take it easy during June, July and August. And to some extent, many parish activities do function on such a schedule. Our parish may not hold Religious Education classes during the summer. Our choirs frequently take a break. Even many of the parish staff members take summer vacations! Can’t our giving take a vacation during the summer, too?

Even as we form the question in our mind, we know the answer. The prime reason for keeping up our pledge all summer long is that God doesn’t go on vacation. He continues to sustain us throughout the summer months. He persists in pouring out blessings on us, even during the hottest weather. He keeps on meeting us in His sacramental presence when we go to Mass wherever we travel. As God remains faithful to us during the summer, we are

called to be faithful in our commitments to Him and our parish family, even during our vacation time.

God’s steadfastness in giving to us is the primary reason for us to respond by being faithful in our stewardship toward Him. But there is also a practical reason why we need to keep up our pledges of time, talent and treasure throughout the summer – the Church needs our involvement year-round.

Even though some parish activities are reduced during the summer months, the parish’s expenses are not. After all, there are still Sunday Masses and weekday Masses, too. The parish staff members still need their salaries. And of course, we need to run the air conditioning in our church during the hot summer months. Despite the fact that some parish functions are suspended, other activities may take place, such as Vacation Bible School. And although the regular parish Religious Education program may be suspended, the summer expenses are often the highest, as textbooks and other supplies are bought for the upcoming school year. Our parish has to pay its bills on a year-round basis, just like your family.

Our parish plans a budget for the year, taking into account the commitments that you, the members, have made. If parishioners do not live out their financial commitments to the parish, the budget will not balance.

Our giving needs to be maintained throughout the summer, just as God maintains His generosity to us. Our stewardship is a response to God’s gifts. And God pours out His gifts and His grace upon us all year long.

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

One Heart and One Mind, Sharing Faith Together

Dear Parishioners,

The beautiful season of Easter ends with the Feast of Pentecost, when we are sent in the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim Christ to the ends of the earth; or as we say at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to “bring Christ to the World.” We then spend several weeks remembering who we are as the body of the Risen Christ. One week after Pentecost, we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Trinity, our own participation in the Divine Life of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. After the Feast of the Holy Trinity, we celebrate the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, the outpouring of Christ’s life for us and the offering of our lives to Him, which becomes true food for our souls. We will again celebrate a Corpus Christi procession following our noon Mass, witnessing to our faith in the Eucharist by processing throughout the community of O’Fallon, letting the world know whom we serve and to whom we belong.

Then, on the Friday following Corpus Christi, we celebrate the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, grateful for Jesus’ desire to share life with us and committed to sharing life with Jesus, conforming our hearts to His.



We often speak of these feasts in the life of the Church as great mysteries; they are actually an invitation to share the very life of God in all our relationships, in all our activities, in the very desires of our hearts and the longing of our souls. The truth of Easter joy, our confidence in resurrection life and our power in the Holy Spirit compel us to reflect more deeply on God’s revelation of Himself as Trinity, as self-gift and as our lover. All that remains for us now is to respond to God’s abundant grace and mercy. What response can we make to the gift of God’s own life poured out in our hearts?

We have already answered from the depths of our soul; we already know the only place this relationship of love can go. We must return it all to the Lord. God’s gift of Himself to us demands the gift of our lives to Him. We can do this. Our “yes” can mirror Mary’s “yes” to God. Our “yes” through a surrendering love can, indeed, bring Christ to the world.

We are so blessed at the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish. We have an opportunity, every day, to practice what we believe. Through our involvement in the many ministries of the parish and our commitment to pray with and for one another, we are living witnesses to what happens when the believers are of one heart and one mind, sharing faith together. I am grateful to all of you for revealing to the world what it really means for us to be an Easter People. God bless you always.

Per Matrem Ad Filium,
(Through the Mother to the Son)

Fr. Mitch Doyen,
Pastor

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FR. ZAC REFLECTS ON FAITH, PRAYER LIFE, A

It has been almost a year now since Fr. Zac Povis first came to Assumption as Associate Pastor, and he has truly enjoyed his time here with us thus far! Father spent the first year of his priesthood continuing his studies in Rome, so when he arrived here in July 2016, it was for his first full-length assignment to a parish. While he greatly appreciates the valuable time of formation and learning he experienced as a seminarian in Rome, this St. Louis native and self-proclaimed “homebody” was happy to return to Missouri last year to serve in our archdiocese.

During his first year as Associate Pastor, Fr. Zac has found Assumption to be a very welcoming and exciting place.

“The people are great, there is always a lot going on, and it’s just been very enjoyable,” he says. “What I love about it on a human level is that every day is very different and you never know what will come across your desk or what will happen. I like that – it keeps it very fresh and exciting. I’m still learning a lot and obviously there have been some mistakes along the way, but we’re getting there.”

Two of the things Father has found the most rewarding about the priesthood are the sacramental life and the many opportuni-



Fr. Zac Povis

ties to teach about the faith, in both formal and casual settings. He is also thankful for the graces that come with a devotion to praying the Liturgy of the Hours. Also called the Divine Office or Breviary, the Liturgy of the Hours is an official set of prayers of the Church that are offered at various times during the day. All priests and religious men and women make a promise when they take their vows to pray the Liturgy of the Hours daily, and many lay people also enjoy participating in this tradition.

For Fr. Zac, a devotion to the Liturgy of the Hours is a great way to maintain a strong and

faithful prayer life.

“It gives a nice routine to prayer life,” he says. “It keeps your feet on the ground a little bit and keeps a balance of formal prayer with informal, spontaneous prayer. It’s a nice anchor to center your prayer life on.”

Because the Liturgy of the Hours is a praying of the Old Testament psalms, it helps the faithful to stay rooted in the traditions of the universal Church established by Jesus Christ.

“With Liturgy of the Hours, you’re praying the prayers that Jesus would have prayed – as a Jew, He would have prayed the psalms,” explains Fr. Zac. “Also,

AND HIS FIRST YEAR AS ASSOCIATE PASTOR

you know that you're praying the same prayers at the same time of day as people all around the world. I have often thought about that, whether I was in England, Germany, Italy, or wherever. So I encourage everyone to think of it that way – as the universal church, we are praying the same way as people all over the world.”

Knowing what a blessing the Liturgy of the Hours has been in his own faith life, Fr. Zac loves to share this form of prayer with others. He likes that the book of prayers is small, so he can easily carry it around the parish school and let it spark questions from the students. In addition, Assumption began offering morning and evening prayers at the chapel during Lent. The interest in this prayer time was so great that morning prayers are still being led there every morning at 7:30 a.m.!

While Liturgy of the Hours is one great way to maintain a healthy spiritual life, Fr. Zac also

suggests that anyone looking to pursue a closer relationship with the Lord carve out time for prayer whenever they can — even if it means simply turning off your car radio to say a decade of the Rosary or other prayers.

As Fr. Zac points out, God's greatest wish for us is that we stay in touch with Him through prayer and the sacraments.

“We come to Mass because the Lord wants us to receive the greatest gift on earth in the Eucharist,” he says. “Stay close to the sacraments and trust that they work, even if you don't feel it – avail yourselves of the grace and trust that it's working. If you haven't been to Mass regularly, don't put it off. We miss you when you're not here!”

Now, two years after his ordination and one year after he first arrived at Assumption as Associate Pastor, Fr. Zac would heartily encourage any young people who are experiencing a call to the priesthood or religious life to ex-

plore the possibility of whatever vocation God may have planned for them.

“Stay open to it, talk to a priest or religious about it, and just to repeat Pope St. John Paul II – don't be afraid,” Fr. Zac advises. “It's a very exciting life and trust that you will be happy and fulfilled doing it. God didn't create anyone to be unhappy and won't call them to something that will make them unhappy. I tell the kids in our school to pray three Hail Marys for vocations every day and to ask God what He put them on this earth to do. We need more vocations and people praying for it.”

Speaking from his own experience, Fr. Zac summarizes the call to vocation and the life of a priest with these words:

“I describe it as the adventure of a lifetime.”

We are certainly blessed here at Assumption to have Fr. Zac sharing his adventures in faith and prayer with us!

“We come to Mass because the Lord wants us to receive the greatest gift on earth in the Eucharist. Stay close to the sacraments and trust that they work, even if you don't feel it – avail yourselves of the grace and trust that it's working. If you haven't been to Mass regularly, don't put it off. We miss you when you're not here!” – Fr. Zac Povis


FUNERAL MINISTRY REACHES

As a parish community, we are called to serve our brothers and sisters in Christ – and when someone loses a loved one, it is a time when they need that helping hand the most. At Assumption, our Funeral Ministry is here to help with funeral planning and to offer compassion and support every step of the way.

“From the moment we find out that someone has died, there are so many hearts and hands that go into the process,” says Funeral Coordinator Amanda Suchara. “We really want to hear from families how they want to honor their loved one’s life, and give them that final piece of dignity and rest. We want to help things to go as right as possible, and to help the family heal and keep breathing.”

When a family loses a loved one, the funeral home will contact Amanda and the parish office to begin the arrangements. Next, either Amanda or a member of our clergy will sit down with the family to learn about their loved one, and to plan the music and readings for the funeral Mass. Many volunteers from the parish give of their time and talent to provide music, assist with the liturgy and provide a luncheon for funeral attendees.

“There are scores and scores of people involved in all these processes,” Amanda says. “Everybody gets involved – since it’s such a big parish, it’s beautiful to see people put aside their regular duties in order to get the most efficient response.”



“The Paschal candle is lit at every funeral and at every baptism, and inch by inch, you see that candle burn down,” Amanda Suchara says. “It’s a symbol of new life in two very different ways.”

OUT *With Compassion*

Vocalists and keyboardists from the Music Ministry, as well as the Assumption Funeral Choir, provide the music for the Mass. While the family and friends of the deceased have first right of refusal for readings and other liturgical duties, parish volunteers are available if the family needs support in these areas. Finally, dedicated parish sacristans spend time preparing for the Mass, serving at the Mass, and cleaning up afterwards.

After the funeral, the parish will often host a luncheon for family and friends. The luncheon is 100-percent organized by parish volunteers.

“We have three ‘captains’ with teams of about 20 people,” Amanda says. “Some of the women have been doing this for 40-50 years! The captain makes phone calls to their team – who bring the food – and are also on the premises to set up, guide and do the cleanup. It’s a huge gift of time, and they do it so lovingly. It says a lot about everyone who has been a part of the ministry over the years, because they pass that spirit along.

“We tend to have a lot of people step up and bring dishes and bring food, but we’re also looking to regrow and develop this aspect of the ministry so that we can have a few more captains,” she adds. “Anyone with daytime weekday availability is welcome to join us, and if we get enough people to step up in that role, the load gets shared and you’ll only need to do it every month or every two months.”

Amanda notes that funerals give the parish an opportunity to reach out with true Christian welcome and compassion.

“The two things that are essential to every funeral, start to finish, is unconditional welcome and unconditional compassion,” she says. “People come from such diverse backgrounds, and it’s at funerals that we see people reconnecting with the

Church. Maybe it’s folks who have been away from the practice of the faith, or people who are staunch non-believers, but they all seem to gravitate towards funerals and weddings, and it’s at those occasions that Assumption gets to be that face of extraordinary, radical welcome. We want them to feel at home here, and to be an extension of the family to the others at the funeral at times when the family is focused on their own grief.

“This is coupled with unbridled, unconditional compassion,” she continues. “People grieve in so many ways, and we have seen so many people of different ages and so many different circumstances that lead to death. It seems that every experience of death is sudden, whether it’s someone who has been struggling for 10 years, or a quick trauma. Everyone, in their own moment of grief, responds to that differently, so that compassion needs to be there for everyone.”

For these reasons, it’s important for the Funeral Ministry – and for the parish at large – to make sure that the bereaved are receiving all the support they need, and to share important resources with them.

“In the moment of a death and funeral, there is an avalanche of support and people who surround a grieving family,” Amanda says. “As we get further away from that death and funeral, folks still wrestle with grief and how to readjust their life. The parish needs to be there for them in the time that follows, throughout the different stages of grief. A family might realize even a year or two later that they need support with certain things. We want them to know that they can keep coming back to the Church to find those resources. If necessary, we can also get them in touch with our grief counseling group. We are always in it for the long haul, and we want to make sure that families don’t ever feel alone in their grief.”

Anyone who would like to volunteer for any aspect of the Funeral Ministry or who is in need of support is welcome to contact Amanda Suchara at 636-577-3776.

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Making Time for the Joy of Eucharistic Adoration

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schedule much like any other hobby or enjoyment.

“We always find time for the things that bring us joy and are important to us,” Rita says. “For me, I really love watching college basketball and during March Madness, I was amazed by all the time I found to watch basketball. I made that time because it is something that I *enjoy*. Visiting Christ in the Eucharist is the same way. Through going, you receive a joy that sustains and stays with you all week, far beyond the hour you spend there.”

Though it's true that we can pray to God anywhere, says Rita, there is something tremen-

dously powerful about being in our Lord's actual presence through Eucharistic Adoration. It's a feeling like no other as the peace and stillness wash over us, often allowing us to hear God's voice more clearly.

“When you are in the chapel, you are surrounded with complete and total peace, and it's such a deep time of prayer with God,” Rita says. “It's the difference between watching the game on TV and being there in person. It's not the same at all, and if people would just go and experience it for themselves, they would see it.”

All parishioners are invited to come and experience the peace and joy of Eucharistic Adoration themselves. No matter how hectic your day, our Lord is there waiting for you at all hours of the day, eager to spend time with. To learn more about our Eucharistic Adoration Chapel please contact Rita Phillips at 636-240-5785.

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. (MH), Vigil Mass 5:00 p.m. | **Sunday:** 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., Noon

Daily Mass: Monday – Friday: 8:00 a.m., MH at 6:30 a.m.

Perpetual Adoration: 24 hours a day, seven days a week

Reconciliation: Thursday 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the Chapel, Saturday 4:00-4:45 p.m. in the Church