

ST. MARY PARISH

518 South 2nd Street; PO Box 847; Guttenberg, Iowa 52052

Newsletter: May 11, 2023 ~ Rectory: 563-252-1247 ~ Fr.'s Cell: 563-258-3958 ~ www.maryicjoseph.org

LIVE THE LITURGY: Finding Comfort and Strength

~source: *young-catholics.com*

In the gospel, Jesus speaks to his disciples about the coming of the Holy Spirit. He tells them that he will ask the Father to send them another Advocate, the Spirit of truth, who will be with them forever. This Advocate will teach them all things and remind them of everything Jesus has said to them.

As Catholics, we believe in the Holy Trinity – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, and it is through the Holy Spirit that we receive the grace and strength to live our lives according to God's will.

Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit is a great source of comfort and hope for us as Catholics. The Holy Spirit is not just an abstract concept, but a real and present force in our lives. When we receive the Sacraments, particularly Baptism and Confirmation, we are filled with the Holy Spirit and become part of the Body of Christ.

Finally, Jesus tells his disciples that he will not leave them as orphans, but will come to them. This is a powerful reminder that even when we feel alone or abandoned, God is always with us. Through the Holy Spirit, we are connected to God and to one another as members of the Body of Christ.

Happy Mother's Day

Loving God, as a mother gives life and nourishment to her children, so you give life and care for your Church. Bless these women, as we celebrate this day in their honor. May they be strengthened as Christian mothers. Let the example of their faith and love shine forth. Grant that we, their sons and daughters, may honor and appreciate them with a spirit of profound respect. May the example of Mary, mother of Jesus, inspire them to live their vocation as Christian mothers and call their children to faith. Guide and protect them in challenging times and help them to continue to trust in you all the days of their life. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reminder to submit your RSVP to Father Bries' Jubilee Celebration. Please place bottom of invite in baskets in back of church by May 14th or submit your RSVP electronically by clicking [here](#).

**Joint Finance/Parish Council Meeting, Monday, May 15th at 6:30pm
in Brinkmann Hall.**

Mass Schedule: May 15 – May 21, 2023

Mon., May 15: [No Mass Scheduled]

Tues., May 16: 8:30 A.M. – St. Joseph, Garnavillo
Kathleen Nieland & Jane (Matt) Siebrecht

Wed., May 17: 8:30 A.M. – St. Mary, Guttenberg
Cyril & Ann Leliefeld

Thur., May 18: 10:00 A.M. – Guttenberg Care Center
People of the Parish

Fri., May 19: [No Mass Scheduled]

Sat., May 20: Vigil of the Ascension
4:00 P.M.—St. Joseph, Garnavillo
Phil Moser & Angie Berns
5:30 P.M.—St. Mary, Guttenberg
Lynne Finnegan & Steve Steger

Sun., May 21: Feast of the Ascension
8:30 A.M. – Immaculate Conception, N. Buena Vista
10:00 A.M. – St. Mary, Guttenberg, Mass. *Live Streamed*
Albert & Regina Schlueter

MARK YOUR CALENDARS . . .

Turning St. Mary school into our Parish Center for parishioners (and community) use is moving forward! Please stop by the Open House following 5:30 Mass on June 10 or the 10:00 Mass on June 11. If you haven't been in the building for awhile, take a tour, have a snack, share ideas with committee members. We look forward to seeing you there!

Church Exterior Door Replacement:

The Knights of Columbus are coordinating the door replacement project. A preliminary bid of \$48,000 has been received. Other options are still being investigated. The KCs would like to thank everyone who has donated to the door fund. \$31,000 has been received to date. To make a donation, please place an envelope in the collection basket marked KC Door Fund with your check made out to the **Knights of Columbus**.

GOSPEL REFLECTION: Conversations with Jesus

~ Br. John-Marmion Villa

How familiar are we with God's Presence in our lives ... I mean, really?!?! We say that we are because that's the right answer to the question. Recently, I came across a story of an old man dying of cancer.

"The old man's daughter had asked the local priest to come and pray with her father. When the priest arrived, he found the man lying in bed with his head propped up on two pillows and an empty chair beside his bed. The priest assumed that the old fellow had been informed of his visit. 'I guess you were expecting me,' he said. 'No, who are you?' 'I'm the new associate at your parish,' the priest replied. 'When I saw the empty chair, I figured you knew I was going to show up.' 'Oh yeah, the chair,' said the bedridden man. 'Would you mind closing the door?' Puzzled, the priest shut the door.

'I've never told anyone this, not even my daughter,' said the man, 'but all my life I have never known how to pray. At the Sunday Mass, I used to hear the pastor talk about prayer, but it always went right over my head. Finally, I said to him one day in sheer frustration, *'I get nothing out of your homilies on prayer.'* 'Here,' says my pastor, *'read this book by Hans Urs von Balthasar. He's a Swiss theologian. It's the best book on contemplative prayer in the twentieth century.'* 'Well, Father,' says the man, 'I took the book home and tried to read it. But in the first three pages I had to look up twelve words in the dictionary. I gave the book back to my pastor, thanked him, and under my breath whispered, *'for nothin'.*' 'I abandoned any attempt at prayer,' he continued, 'until one day about four years ago my best friend said to me, *'Joe, prayer is just a simple matter of having a conversation with Jesus. Here's what I suggest. Sit down on a chair, place an empty chair in front of you, and in faith see Jesus on the chair. It's not spooky because He promised, "I'll be with you all days."* Then just speak to Him and listen in the same way you're doing with me right now.' 'So, Padre, I tried it, and I've liked it so much that I do it a couple of hours every day. I'm careful, though. If my daughter saw me talking to an empty chair, she'd either have a nervous breakdown or send me off to the funny farm.'

The priest was deeply moved by the story and encouraged the old guy to continue on the journey. Then he prayed with him, anointed him with oil, and returned to the rectory. Two nights later the daughter called to tell the priest that her daddy had died that afternoon. 'Did he seem to die in peace?' he asked. 'Yes, when I left the house around two o'clock, he called me over to his bedside, told me one of his corny jokes, and kissed me on the cheek. When I got back from the store an hour later, I found him dead. But there was something strange, Father. In fact, beyond strange — kinda weird. Apparently just before Daddy died, he leaned over and rested his head on a chair beside his bed.'" (An excerpt from: *Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging* (p. 106-107) by Brennan Manning)

What if we were really attuned to God's Presence in our lives ... like this man in the story? What difference would it make given the realities of the world we live in? How do we even begin to be aware of it? Let's start with this: Jesus never goes back on his word. So, when he says in today's Gospel, "I will come to you" and "I will love him and reveal myself to him," we can be sure that Jesus intends to do this. This is faith. But there is a qualifying clause, "If you love me" (verse 15). IF ... That's a sobering thought. Peter says to Jesus, "You know I love you" (Jn 21:15). We might say the same. But when pressed further, Peter becomes distressed. The same should be said of us. A careful examination of our conscience might reveal that we might love Jesus, but there are also other 'loves' in our lives which attract us. One of my former co-workers in evangelization was fond of saying, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing." It's not that Jesus is a liar, it's that our faith can be flimsy, easily persuaded (or justified) by the ephemeral possession, the esteemed reputation, the novel commodity, the socially acceptable position, the polarizing ideology, the unexpected opportunity, the seductive relationship, or the alluring activity. These may have some value in the short term, but they are not the main thing. The main thing is Jesus, and this lesson is what the man in our story learned even later in life.

Perhaps, we can be honest with ourselves by saying that there are many loves that occupy our hearts and minds. And from that starting point, let's learn to have a conversation with Jesus about what — or who — the 'main thing' in our lives should be.

Women's faith sharing group will meet the 2nd and 4th Saturdays at 1 pm at Sode's Green Acre for food and fellowship. All women are welcome to attend, as many or as few meetings as you want. Call Jenn Glenis @ 608-225-3018 or email jennifer.glenis@gmail.com with questions.

A Stewardship Moment

Those who obey the commandments, Jesus says in today's Gospel, are the ones who really love Him. Does my stewardship reveal my love for Jesus?



New "Spiritual and Christian"

books are now available on the table in the entry of the church for you to read and use. *These are provided by the PARISH LIFE COMMITTEE!*

During the month of May, decorated crosses for Memorial Day will be for sale after the 5:30 pm and 10:00 am Masses in the back of church.



Upcoming Parish Events

May 12: Mother/Daughter/Friend Banquet, 6:30pm, United Methodist Church

May 13: Women's Faith Sharing, 1pm @ Sodes

May 14: RSVPs due for Jubilee

May 27: Women's Faith Sharing, 1pm @ Sodes

June 4: Celebration of Fr. Bries' 50th Jubilee of Priesthood Ordination

June 12-16: Vacation Bible School, St. John's Church