



Dear Parish Family,

As the sun of summer begins to shift and schedules take on a new rhythm, August gently leads us into a season of reflection, renewal, and preparation. While vacations wind down and classrooms reopen, the Church invites us to lift our hearts toward heaven—especially as we celebrate the richness of our Catholic life.

This month's newsletter takes a slightly different turn. While you'll still find reflections on feast days and the lives of the saints, **many of our features are especially geared toward families, children, and the rhythm of the school year.** From **blessing backpacks** to the **uses of holy water in the home**, and from offering up **Sunday distractions as sacrifice** to discovering why **bringing kids to Mass matters**, this issue offers practical support for parents and meaningful insights for the entire parish.

And if you're curious where to find the **world's largest monstrance**, you'll want to check out our highlight on **Fête-Dieu du Teche**, a uniquely Louisiana tradition celebrated on the Feast of the Assumption.

We hope this month's edition uplifts your spirit, strengthens your family's faith life, and helps deepen your connection to the

beauty of our Catholic tradition as we journey through August together.

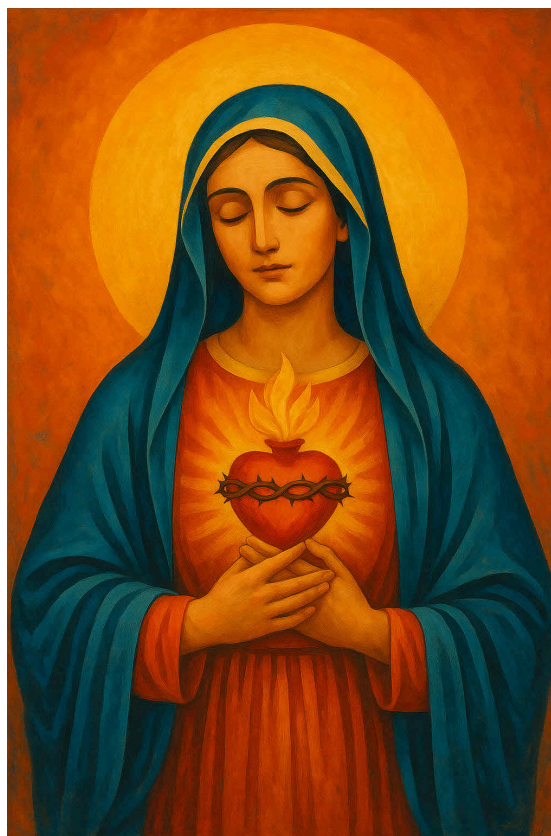
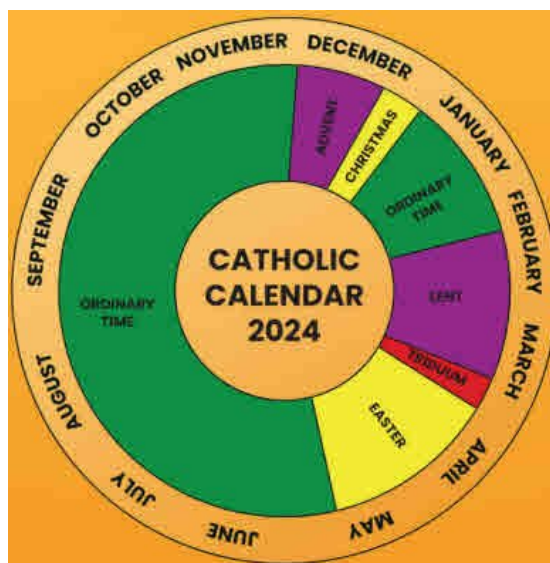
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The Liturgical Year in August

The Month of August is dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. While May is dedicated to Mary as our mother and queen, **August invites us to go deeper**—into her **heart**, where we encounter her most tender and intimate love for God and all humanity.

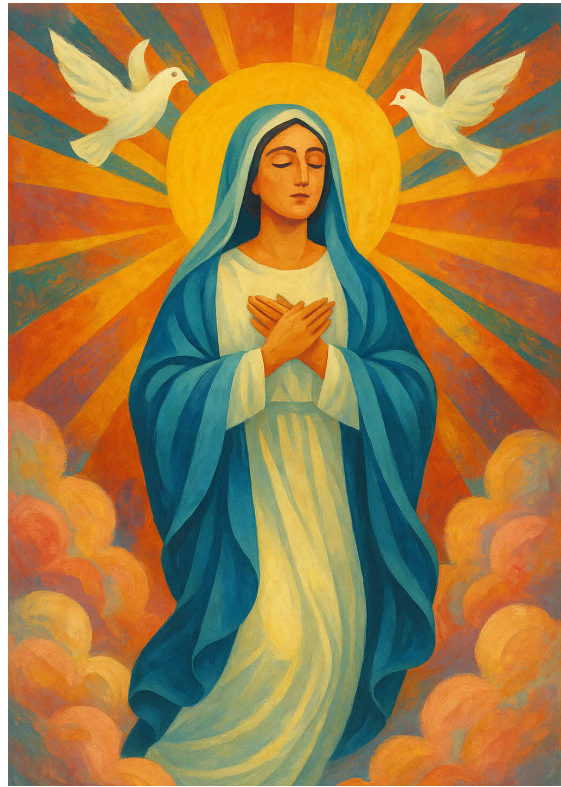
The **Immaculate Heart of Mary** isn't just a symbol; it's a spiritual reality that draws us into **Mary's pure love**, her **suffering**, and her **total union with Jesus**.

In a world that often prizes self-promotion, distraction, and noise, the Immaculate Heart of Mary is a **sanctuary of silence, love, and surrender**. Her heart leads us to Jesus, reminds us of the beauty of holiness, and calls us to become people of **peace, mercy, and compassion**.



The Assumption of Mary: Our Blessed Mother Leads the Way (August 15th)

Each year on **August 15**, the Church celebrates the **Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**—a solemn holy day reminding us of the hope that lies ahead for all who follow Christ. On this day, we reflect on the beautiful truth that **Mary was taken body and soul into heavenly glory**, a sign of what awaits the faithful at the end of time.



But what does this mystery really mean for us?

Mary: First Among Believers

Mary's Assumption is not only about her—it's about us too. Because she is the first to follow her Son so completely, she also shares fully in His victory over death. Her Assumption reminds us that our bodies matter, that heaven is our true home, and that God's promise of resurrection is real.

Where Mary has gone, we hope to follow.

A Holy Day, A Holy Invitation

The Assumption is a **holy day of obligation**—meaning Catholics are called to attend Mass. But it's more than an obligation. It's an **invitation** to renew our love for the Blessed Mother and to ponder the path of discipleship she shows us. Mary's life—full of humility, trust, and surrender—points us toward a deeper relationship with her Son.

The Assumption and You

In a world filled with uncertainty, the Assumption is a promise: God is faithful. Just as He brought Mary home to Him, body and soul, He will also be faithful to us. Her Assumption is not the end of her story—it's the beginning of her motherly care for us in heaven.



DID YOU KNOW? Fête-Dieu du Teche: Honoring Mary by Land and Water

Each year on **August 15**, the **Feast of the Assumption**, Catholics in southern Louisiana celebrate a truly unique and moving tradition: **Fête-Dieu du Teche**, a **Eucharistic boat procession** along the Bayou Teche.

The day begins with **Holy Mass in French**, after which the **Blessed Sacrament is placed in what is believed to be the largest monstrance in the world**. The monstrance is then carried reverently on a boat, leading a flotilla of priests, religious, and families in **canoes, kayaks, and fishing boats**, with stops at various churches for prayer and benediction.

This beautiful tradition is both a **public act of devotion** and a celebration of **Mary's Assumption into Heaven**, honoring her as the one who always points us to her Son in the Eucharist.

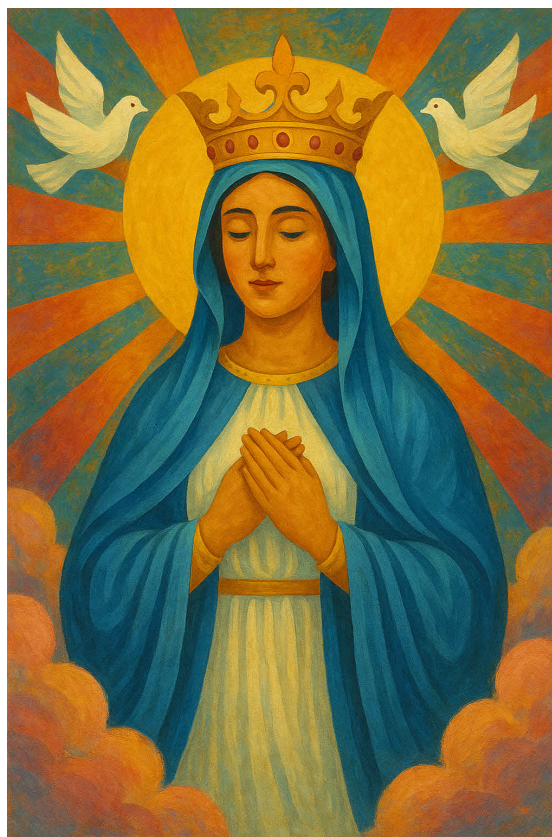
👉 Watch a glimpse of this powerful procession here: [Fête-Dieu du Teche](#)

The Queenship of Mary: A Crown of Humility and Love (August 22)

On **August 22**, the Church celebrates the **Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary**, just one week after the Assumption. If the Assumption reminds us of Mary's heavenly destiny, the Queenship celebrates her role in God's kingdom—not as a distant monarch, but as a motherly queen who lovingly intercedes for us.

Why Do We Call Mary Our Queen?

Mary is queen because she is the **Mother of the King**—Jesus Christ. Just as the mother of the king held a special place of honor in biblical times, so Mary is honored in heaven as Queen of Heaven and Earth.



But her crown is not one of gold or power. It is the crown of **humility**, **obedience**, and **love**. Mary never sought greatness for herself. She gave her “yes” to God, trusted through uncertainty, and stood at the foot of the Cross. Her queenship flows from her faithfulness.

A Queen Who Listens

Unlike earthly royalty, Mary's greatness is rooted in her deep compassion and closeness to us. Countless saints throughout the centuries—including St. Louis de Montfort, St. Maximilian Kolbe, St. Teresa of Calcutta, to name a few—have turned to Mary as Queen and Mother, entrusting their lives to her gentle guidance. We too can turn to her:

- When we feel lost or unsure
- When we pray for loved ones

- When we want to grow closer to her Son

Mary listens. She brings our prayers to the throne of grace.

St. Monica and St. Augustine: A Story of Hope, Perseverance, and Grace (August 27 & 28)



As August draws to a close, the Church honors two remarkable saints whose lives are forever linked: **St.**

Monica (feast day: August 27) and her son, **St. Augustine** (feast day: August 28). Their story is a powerful reminder that no one is beyond the reach of God's grace—and that a parent's prayer can echo through eternity.

A Mother's Tears

St. Monica lived in North Africa in the 4th century. A devout Christian, she carried the heavy cross of watching her brilliant but rebellious son, Augustine, drift far from the faith. For years, he rejected Christianity, pursued pleasure, and immersed himself in philosophies that left his soul empty.

Monica never gave up. She prayed. She fasted. She wept. She followed Augustine from city to city, never losing hope. Her quiet persistence and unshakable trust in God are what ultimately opened the way for his conversion.

A Heart Transformed

St. Augustine's eventual conversion is one of the most famous in Church

history. Through the influence of his mother and the preaching of St. Ambrose, Augustine experienced a profound awakening. He was baptized at age 33, became a bishop, and went on to become one of the greatest theologians the Church has ever known.

His classic work *Confessions* tells the story of his restless heart searching for meaning—a journey that many still relate to today. His most famous line captures the longing we all feel:

“You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.”

Lessons for Today

The story of Monica and Augustine is not just a history lesson—it’s a message of **hope for every parent, grandparent, and loved one** praying for someone who has drifted from the faith. It reminds us:

- **Don’t give up.** God hears every tearful prayer.
- **Conversions take time.** God works in hidden ways.
- **Our example matters.** Monica’s faithful witness softened her son’s heart.

Their Legacy Lives On

St. Monica and St. Augustine show us that **grace is patient, personal, and powerful**. Their story is a love story—between a mother and her son, and between a wandering heart and the God who never stops calling. Whether you’re praying for a loved one or searching for your own way back, know this: **God never stops pursuing us.**

👉 **FORMED.org:** Watch [Restless Heart](#), a story about the life of St. Augustine.

👉 **Hallow:** Listen to 7 short (5-10min) sessions about [Sts. Monica & Augustine](#)

Back to School: A Catholic Perspective

As summer winds down and backpacks are filled with fresh supplies, the start of a new school year brings a mix of excitement, nerves, and anticipation. For Catholic families, it's also a time to reflect on how faith can shape the school year ahead—not just in religion class, but in the everyday rhythm of learning, growing, and becoming the person God created each child to be.



More Than Grades

In today's culture, school is often measured by test scores and report cards. But the Catholic perspective sees education as something deeper: the formation of the whole person—**mind, body, and soul**.

Whether your child attends a Catholic school, public school, or is homeschooled, the goal remains the same: to grow in **wisdom, virtue, and love of God**.

As St. John Bosco once said, "**Education is a matter of the heart.**"

Start with Prayer

Before the rush of routines, start each day with a moment of prayer. A simple morning offering, a Hail Mary in the car, or a quiet blessing over your children's heads can set the tone for the day. Consider:

- Blessing backpacks at Mass or at home with holy water
- Creating a prayer corner or lunchbox prayer card
- Asking your child's patron saint to guide them this year

Living the Faith in School

Being Catholic isn't something to check at the classroom door. Whether it's standing up for kindness, helping a struggling classmate, or showing respect to teachers, small daily actions can reflect Christ's love. Encourage children to:

- See classmates as children of God
- Invite Christ into their challenges and successes
- Offer a short prayer before a test or tough moment

For Parents and Teachers

You are the first educators of faith. The most powerful lessons aren't always taught in words but in the way you love, forgive, and serve.

- Be a calming presence when anxiety rises
- Speak with hope about the year ahead
- Ask God for the grace to guide with patience and purpose

A New Year, A New Opportunity

Each school year is a fresh chapter—an invitation to grow not just smarter, but holier.

St. Thomas Aquinas, patron saint of students, pray for us!

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, patron of Catholic schools, pray for us!

Holy Water at Home: A Simple Way to Keep Faith Flowing

As families prepare for a new school year, it's a great time to bring a simple but powerful tradition back into daily life: **holy water**.



Used since the earliest days of the Church, holy water is a **sacramental**—a physical reminder of our baptism and a spiritual weapon for blessing and protection. Here are some meaningful ways families can use holy water at home:

Start and End the Day with a Blessing

Encourage children to make the Sign of the Cross with holy water before school and before bed. It's a gentle way to invite God into their day and their dreams.

Bless Your Home

Sprinkle holy water around your house, especially bedrooms, doorways, and children's backpacks or school supplies. Ask for God's peace and protection over your family and your space, including their homework space in addition to your work space.

Calm Anxiety and Strengthen Faith

When a child feels nervous before a test, sports event, or big day, invite them to bless themselves and say, *"Jesus, I trust in You."*

Place a Holy Water Font by the Door

Make it easy to remember! A small font near the entrance can help turn ordinary comings and goings into moments of prayer.

Holy water isn't just for church—it's for everyday life. With faith, it's a visible sign of God's invisible grace, helping to keep our homes centered in Christ.

Mass, Distractions, and the Sacrifice That Matters

Fr. Mike Schmitz offers a beautiful reminder for parents—and **for all of us**

—about what really happens at Mass.

The **heart of the Mass** is not just the moment of Consecration or even Communion, but the **offering of the sacrifice of Christ to the Father**: *“Through Him, with Him, and in Him...”*



◆ For parents of young children, that sacrifice often looks like distraction:

- No quiet moments for reflection
- No uninterrupted prayer
- Just the messy effort of showing up and keeping children (somewhat) contained

But that effort is not wasted. It **is** the sacrifice.

It can be **united to the sacrifice of Christ**, offered with love to the Father.

◆ And for those without children? That moment when you can't focus because a child is squirming or crying nearby—**you have a sacrifice to offer, too.**

Mass isn't always peaceful or personal. Sometimes it's chaotic, noisy, and challenging. But that's exactly the moment we can say: **“I offer this, Lord, through Your Son.”** Whether in perfect silence or holy distraction, **we all have something to offer.**

👉 [Watch Fr. Mike's one-minute reflection](#) here - OR -

👉 Read the short article: [How Can I Get More Out of Mass While Wrangling With Kids?](#)



Eucharistic Miracle in Siena, Italy

On **August 14, 1730**, thieves broke into the Church of St. Francis in **Siena, Italy**, and stole a ciborium containing **consecrated Hosts** from the tabernacle. Three days later, on **August 17**, the Hosts were found in the **alms box** of another church—**St. Mary of Provenzano**. Although they had been treated disrespectfully and exposed to the elements, the Hosts were still **intact**.



The Hosts were reverently transferred back to St. Francis and placed in a special container for veneration. Over time, what amazed both the faithful and scientists was that the Hosts did **not decay**—despite being made only of unleavened wheat bread and kept under ordinary conditions, **they remained fresh and unchanged** for centuries.

Numerous investigations, including one in **1914 by Professor Siro Grimaldi**, confirmed there was **no natural explanation** for their preservation. To this day, the Hosts are displayed and venerated in Siena, continuing to **appear fresh** nearly 300 years later.

This miracle is considered a powerful testimony to the **Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist** and has been recognized and honored by the Church.

The Jubilee Year: A Time of Grace

We hope that you are taking advantage of the great graces offered this Jubilee Year and continue to encourage you to visit any of the 9 pilgrimage sites around St. Louis.

[2025 Jubilee Year of Hope Brochure](#)
[2025 Jubilee Pilgrimage Sites](#)

👉 **Check out** the **Hallow** app or website for all things Jubilee Year under the section: **Jubilee of Hope**



August Feast Days

- 4. St. John Vianney, Memorial
- 6. **Transfiguration**, Feast
- 9. St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Opt. Mem.
- 10. **St. Lawrence**, Feast
- 14. Maximilian Kolbe, Memorial
- 15. **ASSUMPTION OF MARY**, Solemnity
- 24. St. **Bartholomew, Apostle**, Feast
- 27. St. Monica, Memorial
- 28. St. Augustine, Memorial

👉 **Check out** the **Hallow** app or website for a number of audiobooks broken into multiple sessions and perfect for a walk or a ride in the car! The current selection of popular titles include: **A Grand Slam for God, Story of a Soul** (St. Therese of Lisieux), **A Song for Nagasaki**, St. Augustine's **Confessions** and **Imitation of Christ**.

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