

The Church of Saint Boniface
May 17 and May 24, 2020
Sixth and Seventh Sundays of Easter



"For many possessed people, and many paralyzed and crippled people were cured. There was great joy in that city."

(Acts 8,7-8)

FROM THE DESK OF THE PASTOR

Do Your Part! (Spread the Good News.)

When will we have Mass again at Church? A good number of people have asked me when we will be back at church again. The quick answer is: we do not know yet; it all depends on how soon and safely we emerge from this pandemic. The actual 'okay' to resume public masses and gatherings at all parishes comes from the Bishop.

The diocese has given us a few preliminary guidelines to begin to prepare ourselves for a Phase II, State by State re-opening as it happens. I have convened a small re-opening team that will study these guidelines to come up with a sober action plan for our parish. Our priority is following all the coronavirus protocols to ensure health and safety.

In the meantime, our parish has been busy. We have weekly video Masses, a bi-weekly bulletin, the parish website is updated weekly and has a lot of rich resources there for your family or individual spiritual nourishment, visible parish activities like giving out Palms and Bibles, the Knights of Columbus food drive, Women's Guild rosary, home Mass kit pick up, and this week the Sisters, Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, of St. Benedict Center in Still River, will be here recording a musical tribute for the Month of Mary, ...so we are here and still alive.

I ask your kind attention to this one thing however. Your parish relies on your generosity and stewardship. As many of us are re-adjusting our financial resources at home, please consider your parish if possible. The Preschool is our lifeline and it is now closed. Even as things open up and the Governor allows preschools to open, we may have a slow start and summer is here, too. The summer months are usually the worst months for the Preschool. We need this income and it is not there. Our Sunday collections are down (as expected). The finance council will lean out our bills further, but as you all know bills just keep coming in and going up. Hence I ask that you keep your parish in mind. We know we have a mission: we love our parish and we want to keep it and its mission alive. The Gospel of Christ Risen must continue to thrive in our community, our families and our lives.

My Parish, My Home.

Have a Blessed week in the Lord!

Father Anthony

P.S. This Sunday's reflection on the readings can be found at the Parish website.



Sisters, Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, of St. Benedict Center in Still River, Massachusetts will visit our church this week to record a musical tribute to Mary. The video will be posted to our website.



IN EXILE

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. (Mt 28:16)

Painful Goodbyes and the Ascension

Among the deeper mysteries in life perhaps the one we struggle with most is the mystery of the Ascension. It's not so much that we misunderstand it, we simply don't understand it.

What is the Ascension?

Historically it was an event within the life of Jesus and the early church and is now a feast-day for Christians, one that links Easter to Pentecost. But it is more than an historical event, it is at the same time a theology, a spirituality, and an insight into life that we need to understand to better sort out the paradoxical interplay between life and death, presence and absence, love and loss.

The pain in this kind of letting go is often excruciating, as parents know, but to refuse is to truncate life. The Ascension names and highlights a paradox that lies deep at the center of life, namely, that we all reach a point in life in which we can give our presence deeply only by going away. So that others can receive the full blessing of our spirits.

What does that mean? When Jesus was preparing to leave this earth he kept repeating the words:

It is better for you that I go away! You will be sad now, but your sadness will turn to joy. If I don't go away you will be unable to receive my spirit. Don't cling to me, I must ascend. (John 16:7ff)

Why is it better sometimes that we go away? Any parent with grown children has heard similar words from their children, unspoken perhaps but there nonetheless. When young people leave home to go to college or to begin life on their own, what they are really saying to their parents is:

Mom and dad, it is better that I go away. You will be sad now, but your sadness will turn to joy. If I don't go, I will always be your little boy or little girl but I will be unable to give you my life as an adult. So please don't cling to the child you once had or you will never be able to receive my adulthood. I need to go away now so that our love can come to full bloom.

The pain in this kind of letting go is often excruciating, as parents know, but to refuse is to truncate life.

The same is true for the mystery of death. For example: I was 22 years old when in the space of four months both of my parents, still young, died. For my siblings and me the pain was searing. Initially we were nearly overwhelmed with a sense of being orphaned, abandoned, of losing a vital life-connection (that, ironically, we had mostly taken for granted until then). And our feelings were mainly cold. There's little that's warm in death.

But time is a great healer. After a while, and for me this took several years, the coldness disappeared and my parents' deaths were no longer a painful thing. I felt again their presence, now as a warm, nurturing spirit that was with me all time. The coldness of death turned into warmth. They had gone away but now they could give me their love and blessing in a way that they never could fully while they were alive. Their going away eventually created a deeper and purer presence.

The mystery of love and intimacy contains that paradox: to remain present to someone we love we have to sometimes be absent, in ways big and small. In the paradox of love, we can only fully bless each other when we go away. That is why most of us only "get" the blessing our loved ones were for us after they die. Mystically, "blood and water" (cleansing and the deep permission to live without guilt) flow from their dead bodies, just as these flowed from Jesus' dead body.

And this is even true, perhaps particularly so, in cases where our loved ones were difficult characters who struggled for peace or to bless anyone in this life. Death washes clean and releases the spirit and, even in the case of people who struggled to love, we can after their deaths receive their blessing in way we never could while they were alive. Like Jesus, they could only give us their real presence by going away.

But that is part of the mystery of love. Eventually we all reach a point where what is best for everyone is that we go away so that we can give our spirit. The gift of our lives can only be fully received after we ascend.

What the Feast of the Ascension Teaches Us about Time

Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? (Acts 1:11)

Let's admit that the angelic question is barbed. It is not so much a question as a veiled command: Let's get on with it.

The Jesus whom they have known is gone. Try as they might, they cannot bring him back, not that Jesus. They will never again hear him preach, never again eat with him, never again walk with him on the roads of Galilee and Judea. First death claimed him; now, the Ascension. Time has moved on, and so must they.

Yet the heart is loathe to surrender what it loves, which is why the heart hates time. We find ourselves wishing that some small portion of life and love could surmount, rather than surrender to, time. If I could keep one remnant of my mother's life, it would be the mornings, admittedly rare, when we sat at her kitchen counter over cups of coffee. Two adults, sharing ideas and offering advice. Both were such blessings. Who could listen more attentively? Whose wisdom could count for more?

Doesn't everyone who mourns wish to barter with time? If you must take my loved one, leave me one cup of coffee, one phone call, one meal, just once in awhile? But time does not trade with us. We have nothing to offer; it moves on, relentless.

Yet, when the disciples lowered their eyes from heaven to earth, they realized that they had not been left alone. Jesus was gone, but a presence remained. It would take time before they would refer to this companionship as the Holy Spirit. This Spirit would make possible—would make real—that deep desire of the human heart for one more cup of coffee, one more meal, one more phone call, once in awhile. It was the Holy Spirit who would quicken the ritual meal that Christ left us. In the liturgy, love surmounts time.



Here's what happened. First, the disciples came to perceive that Jesus was among them whenever they were with each other. His presence was more than that of a wake's comfort, when the memory of the lost one lives large as long as the mourners remain together. No, an active agent, a presence, seemed to be summoning them together, giving them mission and identity. They felt it when they were alone and then found themselves rushing to share it with the others.

Secondly, it was this Spirit who gave the disciples to understand that Jesus had passed over from flesh and blood, which were assumed into heaven, into sacrament, come down to earth when they gathered for the meal. The Greek word for sacrament, *mysterion*, can also be translated as mystery. What first they called "Breaking the Bread" quickly became known as Holy Communion because in this meal they communed with Jesus and with each other.

Wakes are a comfort in the days immediately following a death. They would become jejune and morbid if we tried to keep them going. But "baptism into his death" and "drinking the cup of his blood" weren't a way for the disciples of Jesus to deny the passage of time. They were his way of accompanying his chosen ones through time.

Out of the sacraments came the need to tell the story. The longer they remained a community, they longer they shared a holy communion, the more they came to

understand who had been in their midst, who remained in their midst, and how he had carried their very humanity with him into God. Yet sacraments could journey safely through time, unadulterated, only if they were accompanied by Scripture, by the living record and reflection of the community.

Community, sacrament and Scripture: by means of these three mysteries Christ and his church would defy time. And, in doing so, these mysteries showed themselves to be imbued with the divine, with the Holy Spirit, because only the creator of time can endlessly recreate in time.

Two millennia later, in the power of the Spirit, in the presence of the Son, we give ourselves over to the Father. Christ has brought our human nature to the right hand of God, but we do not stare up into the heavens. Thanks to those men of Galilee, touched by the Holy Spirit, we find Christ in community, in sacrament and in Scripture.

Readings: Acts 1:1-11
Ephesians 1:17-23
Matthew 28:16-20

Pietro Perugino: Polittico di San Pietro
(Wikimedia Commons)

MASS INTENTIONS

May 17	Online Mass	Joe Simoneau , by Saint Boniface Knights of Columbus Council 16480
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WATCH OUR
LIVE STREAMED
MASSES

*Though separated, we gather in
Spirit, Prayer and Heart as One.*

Saint Boniface Mass is LIVE on Saturdays
at 4:00 p.m. on our [Facebook Page](#).

(note: you do not have to be a Facebook member to watch)
Masses will also be recorded and linked on our website
www.stboniface-lunenburg.org and on [YouTube](#).

Watch on television:
Local Access Cable on Sundays at 11:00 a.m.

COLLECTION REPORT

April 2020	
Sunday Offering	\$9,687
Fuel/Maintenance	1,454
Easter	1,040
Other	205
Total	\$12,386

ACH & Website April 2020	
Sunday Offering	\$ 3,742
Fuel/Maintenance	400
Flowers	100
Other	20
Total	\$4,262

Thank you for your support, and to all
who have made a special effort to continue
their contributions throughout these weeks
of the pandemic crisis.

Many parishioners have been making their weekly offerings online from our website. It is secure, convenient and easy to make one-time or recurring donations.

The Saint Boniface Knights of Columbus Food Drive Continues!

While our church remains closed we will continue to collect non-perishable food donations every weekend. Drive through and drop off your donation from 12 noon to 2:00 p.m. on Saturday or Sunday. These will go directly to the Catholic Charities Food Pantry. Thanks to all who have contributed.



5th Annual VIRTUAL Walk for Homeless Families



Saturday June 20, 2020

\$10 Friend
\$25 Supporter
\$50 Advocate

Virtual Celebration

All Donations Greatly Appreciated

Due to the ongoing crisis with the COVID-19 virus, the 5th Annual Walk for Homeless Families hosted by North Star Families Services has gone Virtual!

Signup online to join the walk. Between now and June 20, walk safely in your neighborhood practicing social distancing. Occasionally take a picture of yourself walking and share it on your favorite social media site letting people know you are walking to help homeless families at North Star Family Services.

Then on June 20, 2020 join us for an online celebration!

The COVID-19 virus has affected everyone. But the economic impact will have greater consequences for families living on the edge of homelessness. Your support is needed more than ever! Every dollar donated to North Star Family Services goes to help transition homeless families out of homelessness and into sustainable housing.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF JUSTICE

Sixth Sunday of Easter A, May 17, 2020

Reading I: Acts 8:5-8, 14-17

Responsorial Psalm: 66:1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16, 20

Reading II: 1 Peter 3:15-18

Gospel: John 14:15-21

God With Us

In today's Gospel Jesus promises us that **"I will not leave you orphaned; I will come back to you and you will have life."** Our faith, nurtured in this great paschal season, tells us that God-made-flesh is God-with-us, never abandoning us and always filling us with life.

It should be a great comfort to all of us, who share in the pain and suffering of ordinary life, to know that the Spirit of Jesus is with us always. It should be especially comforting to know that Jesus will not leave orphaned all those whom the world casts aside: the poor and homeless, the racial and ethnic minorities, the sick and dying, the prisoner and the refugee.

"Christ died for sins once for all, a just man for the sake of the unjust." He rescued us from our attachment to injustice, and then he sent his Spirit to remain with us and within us. Our prayer is one of gratitude for such a gift and hope that "we feel its saving power in our daily life."

Jesus loves us so much that, even after his death, resurrection, and ascension, he remains with us. He is, after all, Emanuel, 'God with us,' but now through his living, sanctifying Spirit.

We now encounter him in new ways: in other human beings; in any place where people gather in his name; in the inspired words of Holy Scripture; in his Church, particularly her liturgical celebrations; in the person of his minister; and especially in the sacraments.

U.S. Bishops, *The Eucharist and the Hungers of the Human Family*, 1975.

— Gerald Darring

Saints of the Week

SAINT JOHN I

May 18. Saint John I served as pope for about three years before he died of maltreatment at **the hands of the emperor's men.** He had to face the Arian controversy and negotiate with the eastern part of the empire concerning treatment of heretics.



SAINT THEOPHILUS of CORTE

May 19. Saint Theophilus is a saint known more by reputation than by facts. We know that he was a Franciscan, ordained priest, and served at a retreat house near Subiaco. Theophilus was known for his poverty and his preaching.



SAINT BERNADINE of SIENA

May 20. Saint Bernardine of Siena seems to have been a man with a whole lot of energy. He preached, reconciled cities, fought heresy, and attracted great crowds. Bernardine always traveled by foot, and often preached in more than one city on a given day. He is best known today for his great devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus.



SAINT CRISTÓBAL MAGALLANES and COMPANIONS

May 21. Saint Cristóbal Magallanes and Companions, 21 diocesan priests and 3 laymen, belonged to the Cristero movement during the 20th-century persecution of the Church in Mexico. Martyred over a number of years in eight Mexican states, they were beatified and canonized together.



Saint Boniface Church

817 Massachusetts Avenue, Lunenburg, MA 01462

Parish Office: 978-582-4008 email: stbonifaceparish@verizon.net

Discover St. Boniface ~ Visit our website: www.StBoniface-lunenburg.org

Parish Office Hours

Monday / Wednesday / Thursday 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM (closed 12:00 – 1:00 PM)

The Celebration of the Eucharist

Sunday: 8:00 AM & 10:30 AM

Saturday Vigil: 4:00 PM

Summer Sunday Mass schedule: 9:00 AM
(Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend)

Weekday Masses: 8:00 AM, Wednesday/Thursday/Friday

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (Confession) Saturday 3:00 - 3:30 p.m. or by appointment.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM Adults are baptized at the Easter Vigil as part of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). Infant and child Baptisms are by arrangement.

FIRST EUCHARIST Preparation begins in grade one and includes classes, retreats, and home instruction. Children receive First Eucharist in grade two.

CONFIRMATION Our Confirmation program begins in the 9th grade; students are confirmed in the spring of the 10th grade. For young adults who have been baptized but not yet confirmed, contact the parish office.

SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY It is the policy of the Diocese of Worcester that a couple should contact the parish at least one year prior to the anticipated date of their wedding to allow sufficient time to carry out the various steps of the marriage preparation process. It is important that arrangements be made with the church before plans are made with reception halls, caterers, etc.

ANNOINTING OF THE SICK Please call the parish office 978-582-4008 or email Fr. Anthony at stbonifaceparish@verizon.net or Nancy Cieri 978-582-6983 nancycieri@comcast.net to arrange these visits.

PRAYER LINE MINISTRY If you or someone you know needs prayers or if you would like to be a part of this ministry of those who pray for the needs of neighbors, please contact Sue Cote 978-582-0404 sj33@msn.com.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCIL #16480 *In Service to One. In Service to all.* Members meet in the Parish Hall on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 PM. Any Catholic men over 18 who are interested in joining the Knights should contact Grand Knight James Dijak (978-534-7956) or Deputy Grand Knight Peter Bak (978-403-5119), or email kofc16480@gmail.com.

PARISH STAFF:

	<i>phone</i>	<i>email</i>
Rev. Anthony Mpagi, Pastor	978-582-4008	stbonifaceparish@verizon.net
Jo-Anne Poirier, Administrative Assistant	978-582-4008	stbonifaceparish@verizon.net
Lucy Marcil, Religious Education Coordinator	978-502-7993	lmarcil419@gmail.com
Claire Garrity Neas, Music Ministry	617-823-4237	cmkakosgarrity@aol.com
Louise Nadeau, Sacristan		
Ministry Schedule	978-582-4008	stbonifaceparish@verizon.net
Nina Charpentier, Dir. Early Childhood/PreK	978-582-7110	

Newcomers to St. Boniface are invited and encouraged to formally register as members of the parish so that we may stay in touch with you with faith formation news, notices of special events, volunteer opportunities, and more.

Registration forms are available at the doors of the church or on our website.

Please note that you must be registered for at least six months before we can issue any verification of your status as a parishioner for godparent or sponsor letters.

Saint Boniface Parish
817 Massachusetts Ave.
Lunenburg, MA 01462

To Our Parishioners: We pray that you and your loved ones are well during this time. Until we can gather again in our church, we will continue the bi-weekly mailing of our bulletin. If you have a change of address, or prefer not to receive this mailing, please let us know. You may return this form by mail, call the office at 978-582-4008, or email stbonifaceparish@verizon.net.

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