



**Saturday, May 8**

5:30pm – *Pro populo*

**Sunday, May 9**

8:00am – Intentions of Grace Smith

10:00am – Mary Crosby by Sylvia Jolivet

**Monday, May 10**

8:00am – Erwino Shnandorf

by Ingrid Hennig Cabral

**Tuesday, May 11**

8:00am – The Health of Pamela Mary Woods

**Wednesday, May 12**

8:00am – *No Morning Mass*

5:30 pm Vigil of the Lord's Ascension - *Pro populo*

**Thursday, May 13**

8:00am – Solemnity of the Ascension

Sophia Komienski by William & Marilyn Kinney

**Friday, May 14**

8:00am – *No morning Mass*

**Saturday, May 15**

5:30pm – Thomas Gavin by Harold and Kathleen Hogstrom

**Sunday, May 16**

8:00am – *Pro populo*

10:00am –

**Let us remember in prayer:**

Father John Hamilton,  
priest of the Diocese of Burlington  
and Barbara Bitler, of this Parish

Dear All,

As you can tell from the insert in this week's bulletin, the *worse*, to which the *bad* inevitably comes has befallen the Diocese of Burlington. Parishes are going without priests and Masses because there are not enough priests to go around.

The immediate culprit can easily be identified, immigration policies that force priests with work visas to return to their home countries to renew said visas (and you thought that tighter borders were a good idea!) But the chronic causes are more related to the demography of the State of Vermont.

Back in the sixties it seemed that the population of Vermont would grow in certain areas. And so, we built parishes in those areas. But the growth happened elsewhere. So, there are places with very old parishes that are now small and shrinking and use up priestly resources. But, since they were 'outposts' even at the time of their founding, they are too far away from population centers to be served by priests from other areas.

That population boom took place amongst second-home owners who eventually became full time residents (you know who you are). But these people's children left Vermont, taking their own children with them. For the last forty years, the cohort from which new vocations to the priesthood might be expected to come has shrunk and shrunk and shrunk. Put it a different way: the greying of Vermont has grown the population, but it has also diminished the vocational pool.

More recent immigration has brought some families, but these folks find it hard to identify with Vermont as 'home'. A great place to live, yes; but home is where they lived last. Their children are even more likely to think of Vermont as a temporary 'condition', rather than a community to live in and take responsibility for.

I hear often 'we went to church when we lived in 'x', but when we moved here church got lost as a priority in our lives'. You can imagine how much or little a priority church is in the lives of the kids.

Toss in the scandals that have rocked the Church and almost irreparably damaged the statue of the clergy and the Church's fidelity to a set of moral norms that are now deemed to be something akin to 'hate memes', and parents and their offspring cannot even imagine a future for their children in the work of Catholic ministry.

Aging and dubiously worthy clergy (like YT) are just not inspiring. My bad!

Here's the rough news. If we got fifty young men to enter the seminary today, it would take eight years to get them ordained – if they all persevered, that is. And those eight years would only see a steeper and steeper erosion of the situation.

I have admitted, some of this is my fault. But if those of you who can have not asked a young man to consider the priesthood; and if those who should have not prayed for this very serious need in the Church and diocese ... well, shame on us all.

I am not angry, nor am I in despair. But I am sad and I would be less than responsible if I did not warn you that harder times are ahead and they are hard, in some measure, because of who we are and how we have been.

Really and truly and sadly (for everyone concerned) yours,  
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**Catholic Communication Collection** will be held this weekend, May 15 and 16<sup>th</sup>. Envelopes for this cause are available at the exit from the Church.

**This is Mothers' Day weekend.**

Because the mother's work begins before we are even aware of it, our thanks can never match their love, God does know everything and counts every act of love as an act done for himself. Although this is not a religious feast, we take this opportunity to wish God's choicest blessings to our Mothers and all who take a mother's role in our lives. You are God's chosen instruments for his first and last gift of all – life itself.

**This Thursday, 13th May, is the feast of the Ascension of the Lord**

The dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass continues in force. But for those who long for the old normal or are just fond of an occasional extra Sunday, you will find the schedule for Ascension Day Masses on the opposite page.

**VNA & HOSPICE**  
will provide the training,  
**YOUR BRING THE HEART**

Maybe you've had a personal experience with hospice and want to give back. Perhaps you are a student looking to complete community service hours or maybe you simply have a heart for caring. Hospice volunteers are special. They provide invaluable support and in-home care to patients and their families. No matter what your reason for choosing to help us, we're eager to find a volunteer opportunity that fits with your interests, availability and talents. Join us for our next training in-person on Sunday, June 13th from 8am - 4pm. Proof of full COVID vaccination and preregistration required. For more information, please call Mary at 802.442.0540 or email marypleasant@vnahrs.org