ST. STEPHEN PROTOMARTYR PARISH

August 16, 2020

Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary

The Assumption, *by Juan de Jesus Munera Ochoa*

If you are new to St. Stephen Protomartyr Parish or just visiting — WELCOME!
Visitors, please sign the Guest Book found near the main entrance to the church.
If you would like to register in the parish, please call or email the parish office.
Welcome to the neighborhood and parish community!

PARISH
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St. Louis, MO 63116
314-481-1133 … 314-481-6036 fax
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www.saintstephenstl.org
@sspstl
ststephenprotomartyr.flocknote.com
youtube.com/StStephenProtomartyr

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6304 Minnesota, St. Louis, MO 63111
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STEWARDSHIP: SHARING TIME, TALENT, TREASURE, and PRAYER

"For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable." (Romans 11:29)

God has a special mission in mind for each of us. He has given us the gifts we need to accomplish that mission. We are called to be good stewards by using those gifts to do the work that He has planned for each of us. If we deny our gifts or fail to use them as God calls us to use them, then some part of His work will be left undone.

SUNDAY CONTRIBUTION

August 9 Contribution	$	3,313.00
Online giving contribution	$	2,912.00
Total weekly contribution	**$**	**6,225.00**
R & I	$	435.00
Tuition Assistance	$	250.00
St. Vincent de Paul, SSP	$	110.00
Latin America Apostolate	$	90.00

Special collection in August is for the Latin America Apostolate.

IMPORTANT REMINDER

As we have been seeing an uptick in our metropolitan area of those testing positive for COVID-19, we wanted to take a moment to remind everyone of the Archdiocesan policy on contact tracing:

In order to keep our parish communities safe, ***if you or a loved one are diagnosed with coronavirus*** *(COVID-19), please do not enter your parish grounds and contact your pastor immediately. Pastors have been directed to notify the health department and enact proper disinfecting protocols set forth by the CDC upon receiving this information.*

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Monday: Ez 24:15-23; Dt 32:18-19, 20, 21; Mt 19:16-22

Tuesday: Ez 28:1-10; Dt 32:26-27ab, 27cd-28, 30, 35cd-36ab; Mt 19:23-30

Wednesday: Ez 34:1-11; Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6; Mt 20:1-16

Thursday, St. Bernard: Ez 36:23-28; Ps 51:12-13, 14-15, 18-19; Mt 22:1-14

Friday, St. Pius X: Ez 37:1-14; Ps 107:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9; Mt 22:34-40

Saturday, Queenship of Mary: Ez 43:1-7ab; Ps 85:9ab & 10, 11-12, 13-14; Mt 23:1-12

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time: Is 22:19-23; Ps 138:1-2, 2-3, 6, 8; Rom 11:33-36; Mt 16:13-20

NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES

The parish and school staff have new email addresses, which should all be active by now. In most cases, the addresses are firstname.lastname at saintstephenstl.org, but please verify at the parish staff and school staff pages on our website and update your contacts accordingly.

PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

Following the example of our patron St. Stephen, we are called to be witnesses of God's love and to be a faith-filled, reconciling parish.

OUR LIVE STREAM IS LIVE! (HOPEFULLY?)

At the time of this writing, professional live-stream equipment is being installed in our church. It seems safe to say that **we will be live with this weekend's Masses**. Masses will be available on our YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/StStephenProtomartyr), just as they have been since March. But now they will be available at the time they are being celebrated (and also thereafter).

The broadcast will draw directly from our sound system, so the audio quality will be much clearer than our previously recorded Masses. The plan is to share all of our Masses — the weekdays and both weekend liturgies.

Thank you for your patience while we learn to use the cameras and other features. And thanks again to our anonymous donor for making this upgrade possible. We are grateful that our community can continue to worship together even though we aren't all in the same space.

SCHOOL NEWS

If you are interested in principal **Greg Sturgill**'s latest letter to school parents, you can read it on our website at **www.saintstephenstl.org/news/principals-update-8-6-20**. The letter addresses some of the concerns expressed by the school community since the Return to School Plan was released last week.

Let us continue to keep school administrators, faculty, families, and our COVID Task Force in our prayers as they continue to plan and make difficult decisions.

MASS IN THE PARK

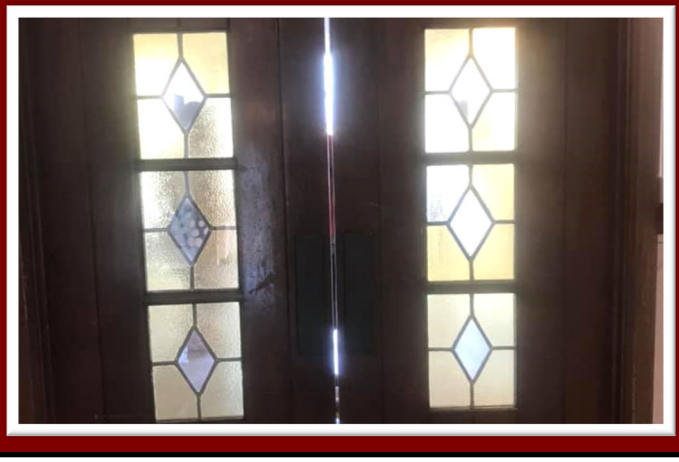
Due to health and safety concerns from the recent rise in COVID-19 cases, the city has rescinded our permit for Mass in the Park, which had been scheduled for **Sept. 19**. As with so many other events, let's hope that we resume next year.

NEW TO THE PARISH FAMILY

Please extend a warm welcome to the newest members of our parish family — **Joyce Lopez** and her son, **Shawn**, and **Dan & Megan Farmer**.

SCHOOL ENTRANCE CONSTRUCTION FINAL WALK-THROUGH

Along with parishioners Christian Clerc, Dan Goodman, and Colleen Nigro, who have overseen this project, we thank parishioner Bridgett Blake, who restored the stained glass in the wooden doors. Beautiful work, all!



SHARK SHOPPE

In addition to the uniform-approved t-shirts and sweatshirts, our **Shark Shoppe** now offers the required PE shorts and personalized lanyards, along with many other SSP-emblazoned items!

Orders placed before Aug. 21 will be available for pickup / delivery by the first week of September.

See our website for the order form and complete information: **https://saintstephenstl.org/shark-shoppe**.

Most items are made to order, so orders can continue to be placed anytime after that. More items — embroidered polo shirts, an #SSPstrong shirt / sweatshirt, bags, and more — will be added to the Shoppe later. Stay tuned.

Thank you, school mom **Kate Schoellhorn / Stick With Kate**, for providing all of these high-quality items for our Shark Shoppe!

POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE

As we approach the five-month mark of Normal for Now, we are inviting you to check in again! **How are you spending your summer vacation?** Send a picture and a short note to stephaniewobbessp@gmail.com and we'll generate your Postcard From the Edge.

Enjoying the scenes from my work-at-home desk in the Village of Shiloh, Illinois ...

Mary Regan

We made the best of staying close to home by revisiting nearby attractions and enjoying some yummy meals from local restaurants.

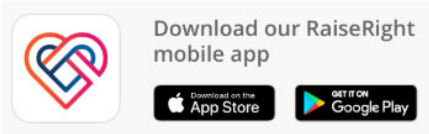
The Wobbe Family

SUPPORT SSP WITH AMAZON SMILE

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice.

To get set up to support SSP through AmazonSmile, visit **https://smile.amazon.com/ch/43-0653569**.

ACE CARDS: THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!



Our ACE (Aiding Catholic Education) card program is a simple way to generate significant funds for our school. All school families are required to purchase $450 per month in gift cards from participating vendors (or Schnucks eScrip purchases) to subsidize their tuition. Parishioners are also encouraged to participate in the program, as all purchases benefit our bottom line. A percentage of each purchase is rebated to our school at no cost to the buyer.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we have had to suspend the sale of physical gift cards. Before that time, many were looking for a way to use the program electronically, and we shared a way to purchase virtual gift cards through MyScripWallet.com.

Now …. for maximum ease of use ... we are pleased to share that **there is an app available!**

Download the **RaiseRight** app from the app store on your smartphone.

- If you are already using MyScripWallet.com, all of your account information will transfer over to the app. Simply download the app and sign in with your existing username and password.
- If you are a NEW user to the electronic format, download the RaiseRight app and follow the steps to create a new account. You will need our unique enrollment code so that SSP gets the benefits of your purchases. The code for St. Stephen Protomartyr is **C1D7C62E7631**.

MyScripWallet.com is still available for now, but the RaiseRight app will replace it later this year.

SINCERITY IN PRAYER, HUMILITY IN FAITH

This Sunday we see a woman whose plight has been ongoing, and she seems to be at her wit's end with no answers on the horizon. She clearly loves her sick daughter, so this mother — a Canaanite who is not a part of the chosen people of Israel — attempts the unthinkable because she's run out of options. She humiliates herself with her desperate plea. Jesus himself seems not to respond at first, and the disciples consider her a nuisance and want her to leave so they can be about the rest of their day. Instead of becoming angry and stomping away or becoming bitter at the lack of assistance, she worships Jesus, despite what this would surely do to her reputation. This catches his attention, and a quick dialogue ensues. She knows the inherent tension between the Canaanites and the Israelites, but this does not deter her from seeking help from the only option left. In the end, her prayer is answered according to her desire.

What a model of faith! So many of us are accustomed to prayers; we learned them when we were young. But our familiarity with prayers isn't always accompanied by a sincerity in our prayer. We rattle off words while our minds are onto the next task on our day's agenda. Our bodies are present, but our hearts haven't yet left the last moment of pleasure, concern, or anxiety. Our prayer life is fragmented because our need for help has been disconnected from our belief in Jesus' mission to save. Certainly, there are life circumstances that are graver than others that bring us to our knees faster, but that doesn't mean that kneeling in prayer — literally and metaphorically — is limited to grave and dire situations.

St. John Chrysostom remarks on the "earnestness of her prayer," which his catches the attention of Jesus in a new way. Jesus admires the tenacity of her faith, and then the miracle of her daughter's healing happens. As we review the flow of the text, this mother does not outright ask Jesus to heal her daughter, as it happens in other healing stories of the Gospels. This mother confesses her need for help with a situation beyond her control. And Jesus recognizes the confidence of her humility, and rewards it with the healing of her daughter. The mother brings all of herself to Jesus, and in her great faith, she sees that the powers of heaven are on her side.

How do we learn, then, to be more present each time we pray?

Listen to yourself breathing. So often, we rush into our times of prayer without properly disposing ourselves for a spiritual encounter. The Rosary and Lectio Divina are, for example, powerful tools for penetrating deeper in the mysteries of God, but without a stilled soul, our efforts lack a key ingredient. Taking a few minutes to quiet ourselves — externally and internally — can be a tremendous aid in deepening our prayer life.

Talk less. Listen more. We live in uncertain times. No doubt. There's an anxiety and hostility in the very air we breathe. There's much to complain or at least converse about. We look for answers to the very complicated situations we face. Yet the only answer is Jesus; the only path is towards the Cross and Resurrection. As we learn to listen to ourselves breathing, hopefully, one of the things that will happen is that we learn to listen to that still, small voice hidden in the deepest corner of our hearts. That small voice is so often crowded out by the mechanics of our prayer time and by the constant barrage of distractions in our interior world. If we can become silent, then God's booming voice can be heard.

Live in faith. Sometimes, we forget that we've already read the last chapter in the 'book of life!' We know that, in the end, Jesus wins! We know that Jesus has already shared his winnings with us because of our Baptism. Yet we approach Jesus in prayer with nonchalantness (If you wanted to do this …), doubt (I don't know if you can do this, but …) or sometimes over-meekness (I'll accept whatever you want …). While there is merit to each of these attitudes, this Canaanite mother gives us an example of the humble boldness of her faith in confessing her need for mercy. She knows she's coming to the Lion of Judah, not — if you'll allow me to be cheeky — to the mouse of Nazareth!

Our prayer life is not rooted in our own strength or resources to find answers to remedies to the complexities of life; rather, it ought to be rooted in Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Each situation we find ourselves in can be seen — with eyes of faith — as opportunities to practice the kind of faith exemplified in the mother of today's Gospel. The prayer of this mother came from her heart to the heart of the only one left for her to ask. It's as if the depths of her heart was speaking to depths of Jesus' heart. Jesus always responds to the prayers that come from the depths of our hearts rather than the multiplicity or eloquence of our words! Would that our prayer life be more like that!

Br. John-Marmion Villa
From LPi *Connect!*

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, August 17
Private Mass

Tuesday, August 18
8 a.m. — Cecelia Hopmeir

Wednesday, August 19
8 a.m. — Gerald Romay

Thursday, August 20
8 a.m. — Mark Domagalski

Friday, August 21
8 a.m. — Cece Driscoll

Saturday, August 22
4 p.m. — John & Cecelia Hopmeir

Sunday, August 23
9 a.m. — Donald Broekelmann

PLEASE PRAY

for our sick and recovering ...

Suzie Beck
Liz Bentrup
Ann Dosenbach
Jan Haffer
Paul Heidbrier
Thomas Lorenz
Joe Mahfood
Bob Marx
Evelyn Matt
Lois McClellan
Steve Moylan
Grace Phillips
Laurie Rahn
Virginia Zenthoefer

for our homebound ...

Jack Heffernan
Albertine Honious
Art Petersen

for family members serving in the military ...

Derek Hirtz
Sam May
Tristan Moylan
Ryan O'Neil
Brian Schoellhorn
Chris Schrader
Dylan Schulte
Mitch Sollmann

DEVOTIONS

Please contact the parish office if you would like to pray privately in the church.

SAINT STEPHEN
Saint Stephen Protomartyr Parish

Parish Office Hours **314-481-1133**

Monday through Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Closed Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays

Bulletin Article Deadline

Monday at 12 p.m. prior to the weekend bulletin.

Sacramental Celebrations

Eucharist
*Make a reservation to attend **weekend** Masses via the link on our parish website or call Mary at 314-481-1133, option 2*

Saturday: Mass, 4 p.m.
Sunday: Mass, 9 a.m.
Tuesday-Friday: Mass, 8 a.m. (no reservations required)

Reconciliation
Please call Father Ron to make an appointment.

Infant and Child Baptism
Baptisms are celebrated at any weekend liturgy or on the last Sunday of the month following the latest Mass. Parents are asked to call the parish office to arrange a Baptism.

Adult Initiation / Reception into the Catholic Church
Any adult who would like to know more about our Catholic faith, and/or who is interested in becoming a member of the Catholic Church, please call the parish office.

Marriage
Please contact at least six months prior to the planned date of marriage.

Anointing of the Sick
We have a communal celebration of this sacrament at the weekend liturgies in the fall and in the spring. If you would like to be anointed before entering the hospital or if you are homebound, please call the office.

Parish School of Religion
PSR formal classes in our Catholic Faith
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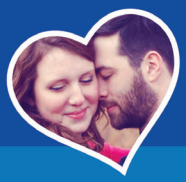
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