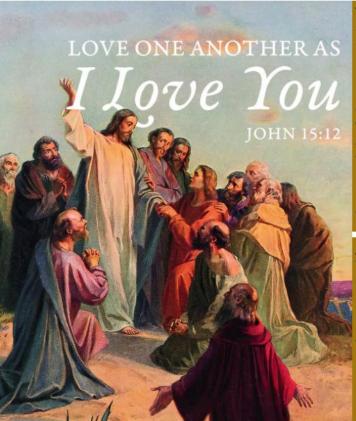
Inspired by Saint Paul · Centered on Christ · Called to Holiness



SAINT PAUL THE APOS May 5, 2024

Sixth Sunday of Easter



Weekend Masses

Saturday (Anticipated)-4:00 PM Sunday-8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, Noon, 5:00 PM

Daily Masses

Monday, Wednesday, Friday-6:40 AM Monday - Saturday-8:30 AM Thursday-6:15 PM We livestream our Sunday 10:00 AM, Saturday 4:00 PM, and 8:30 AM Masses, and weddings, funerals, and special events upon request at stpacc.org/livestream.

Mass Times for Holy Days

Please refer to the parish website or call the Parish Office to confirm Mass times.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Thursdays after the 8:30 AM Mass until 5:55 PM unless otherwise noted.

First Fridays after the 8:30 AM Mass until 4:00 PM

Rosary

After the 8:30 AM weekday Masses Mondays at 6:30 PM in the Church and First Saturdays at 7:00 PM at stpacc.org/onlinerosary

Divine Mercy Chaplet

Monday - Friday at 3:00PM in the Church

Sixth Sunday of Easter

If you are interested in information about becoming Catholic, getting married in the Church or having your children baptized, please turn to page 4 of this bulletin.

Featured -

The Appeal

The Appeal is an annual call to action, uniting the 23 counties of the Diocese of Columbus to provide for our essential mission and amplify our impact on Evangelization, Vocations, Catholic Education, and Social Needs. Learn more about how your gift can make an impact on page 7.



Saint Paul the Apostle Catholic Church

313 N. State Street Westerville OH 43082 614-882-2109 · stpacc.org · stpaulchurch@stpacc.org



Worship Hymnal Readings - #1092

Hymns

Entrance - Love Divine All Loves Excelling #642 Offertory - This Is a Day of New Beginnings #508 Communion Antiphon – see next page Post Communion - Regina Caeli #519





Gloria, New Mass for Congregations, Carroll T. Andrews, revised by Ronald F. Krisman, ©2011. Eucharistic Acclamations, Mass of the Resurrection, Randall DeBruyn, ©2009. Communion Antiphon, music by John Ainslie. Music reprinted with permission from Onelicense.net, License no. A-722737.

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The Pastor's Corner

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

Staying informed: If you do not have Flocknote, I ask that you to please consider getting the app so you are "in the know!" To secure the Flocknote app, just go to stpace.org/flocknote or text STPACC to the number 84576.



The Appeal

This amazing, beautiful church is a testimony to the generosity of our parishioners. It's a kind of living sign of the presence of our community. Through your generous support, we are able to accomplish the mission of Christ in our parish every day of the year. Once a year, we're invited to consider how we might allow our generosity to impact the larger church that we belong to. This weekend, I am speaking at all Masses to introduce The Appeal. This annual diocesan campaign invites all of us to participate in and support the mission of Christ and the church in the 23 counties of our Diocese. It's incredibly important as we partake in the mission to share the love of Christ. I ask you to please prayerfully consider your contribution to The Appeal and to pray for its success.

Our Sunday Offering:

I want to sincerely thank the very many who regularly give of their time, talent, and financial support to our parish. WeShare Online Giving is a secure, and convenient platform. Just text stpaulohio to 800-950-9952 or go online to www.stpacc.org/donate. If you have any questions about your parish offertory or WeShare Online Giving, please contact Parish Accountant Deb Hawking at either dhawking@stpacc.org or 614-882-2109 ext. 229. Thank you!

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Wilson

Communion Antiphon



Choir Anthem Lyrics

Offertory – O Love

O Love (O Love, O Love), that will not let me go, O Love, I rest my weary soul in Thee; I give thee back the life I owe, That in Thy ocean depths its flow May richer, fuller be.

O Joy (O Joy, O Joy), that seeks me through the pain,
O Joy, I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain;
That morn shall tearless be.

O Love (O Love, O Love), that will not let me go, . . .

Post-Communion – Ave Maria

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris Tui, Jesus. Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

MASS INTENTIONS

Sunday, May 5, Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48; Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4; 1 Jn 4:7-10; Jn 15:9-17

8:00 AM Sheumaker Family Intention

5:00 PM † Irene Pasqualone

Monday, May 6

Acts 16:11-15; Ps 149:1b-2, 3-4, 5-6a and 9b; Jn 15:26 - 16:4a

6:40 AM † William Dittmar III 8:30 AM † John Donnelly

Tuesday, May 7

Acts 16:22-34; Ps 138:1-2ab, 2cde-3, 7c-8; Jn 16:5-11

8:30 AM † Bill Tompos

Wednesday, May 8

Acts 17:15, 22 - 18:1; Ps 148:1-2, 11-12, 13, 14; Jn 16:12-15

6:40 AM † Kathryn Flucas 8:30 AM † Jenny Mackinaw

Thursday, May 9

Acts 1:1-11; Ps 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9; Eph 1:17-23 or Eph 4:1-13 or 4:1-7, 11-13; Mk 16:15-20

8:30 AM † Brian Kozel 6:15 PM † Judy Penzek

Friday, May 10

Acts 18:9-18; Ps 47:2-3, 4-5, 6-7; Jn 16:20-23

6:40 AM † Czeslawa Hanafi 8:30 AM † John Muehlbauer

3:00 PM Marriage of Nina Crotty & Gary Hilyard

Saturday, May 11

Acts 18:23-28; Ps 47:2-3, 8-9, 10; Jn 16:23b-28

8:30 AM † Heather Leesman

1:30 PM Marriage of Makenna Kilbane & William

Machingo

Ascension of the Lord (anticipated)

Sunday, May 12, Ascension of the Lord

Acts 1:1-11; Ps 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9; Eph 1:17-23 or Eph 4:1-13 or 4:1-7, 11-13; Mk 16:15-20

8:00 AM † Sheumaker Family Intention

**Mass with incense.

NEW TO ST. PAUL?

Here's what you need to know:

Welcome to Saint Paul the Apostle Catholic Church. Inspired by our patron Saint Paul, we are a parish of disciples of Jesus Christ called to bring His truth and love into our community through humble, collaborative service that is faithful to the Word of God, filled with the Holy Spirit, and centered on the Holy Eucharist.

Welcome Home

Whether you are brand new or returning after a while, we are excited to welcome you to Saint Paul. We look forward to seeing you at Mass and around the parish!

Stay Connected with us

We would love to stay connected with you! There are always new and exciting things happening at Saint Paul. Sign up for our Flocknote newsletter to receive email and text updates from our parish!



STPACC T0 84576



Interested in Becoming Catholic?

If you are curious about Catholicism or seeking to enter the Church, we invite you to get involved in our preparatory program for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). We're happy to accompany you! Find more information about the program at stpacc.org/rcia.

Get Involved

Looking to get involved in a vibrant Catholic community, or serve the Lord and our local Westerville community? We invite you to get to know one of our community opportunities and explore our many ways to serve among all our parish ministries. This week's schedule can be found in this bulletin. More can be found at style="style-type: style-type: square;">style="style-type: square;">style="style-type: square;">style="style-type: square;">style="style-type: style-type: square;">style="style-type: square;">style="style-type: style-type: style-type: square;">style="style-type: style-type: style-type: square;">style="style-type: style-type: st

St. Paul School

Want to give your children a Catholic education? Discover our St. Paul Catholic School (preschool and grades K-8) dedicated to teaching, living, and learning in the light of Christ. stpaulk-8.org

Our Parish Staff

Pastor:

Rev. Jonathan F. Wilson stpaulchurch@stpacc.org

Parochial Vicar

Rev. Antony Varghese avarghese@stpacc.org

Parochial Vicar

Rev. Daniel Olvera dolvera@columbuscatholic.org

Parochial Vicar Emeritus

Rev. David Gwinner Retired Chaplain, Navy

Deacon

Rev. Mr. Joe Ciaciura 740-549-2116

Deacon (Retired)

Rev. Mr. Mickey Hawkins 614-890-2468

Director of Parish Ministry

Andrew T. Burson aburson@stpacc.org

Director of Religious Education

Susan Streitenberger sstreitenberger@stpacc.org

Director of Parish Administration

Rev. Mr. Dean Racine dracine@stpacc.org

Parish Business Analyst

Aron Aziz aaziz@stpacc.org

Pastoral Associate

Jeff Adair jadair@stpacc.org

Coord. of Marriage & Family Life

Dr. Laurie Navin Inavin@stpacc.org

Stewardship Director

Andrea Lopez alopez@stpacc.org

Coord. of Youth & Young Adults

Nathan Forsthoefel nforsthoefel@stpacc.org

Principal

Andrea Pore apore@stpaulk-8.org

Asst. Principal

Stephanie Speed sspeed@stpaulk-8.org

Asst. Principal/Dean of Students

Luke Patterson | Ipatterson@stpaulk-8.org

Music Director

John Bryan jbryan@stpaulk-8.org

Parish Accountant

Deb Hawking dhawking@stpacc.org

Parish Secretary

Pat Kitzler pkitzler@stpacc.org

Parish Office Manager

Dee Shomo dshomo@stpacc.org

Communications Professional

Andy Long along@stpacc.org

Coordinator of Sacraments and Census

Annette Ramos aramos@stpacc.org

Marian Gift Shop Manager

Ellen Sullivan mariangiftshop@stpacc.org

Facilities Manager

Michael Larkins mlarkins@stpaulk-8.org

Parish Office Hours

Monday-Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. (614-882-2109)

Parish Registration

If you will regularly be worshiping with us, we encourage you to register at <a href="mailto:style="style-type: style-type: st

Baptisms

Families wishing to have their child baptized should contact Annette Ramos at aramos@stpacc.org.

Matrimony

If you would like to be married at St. Paul the Apostle, please visit stpacc.org/weddings to begin planning.

Confessions

9:15 AM on Thursdays; at 2:30 PM on Saturdays. The confessionals are located in the Church.

Marian Gift Shop

Our Marian Gift Shop is located in the Church. Shop hours:

Sundays: 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM

Mondays: closed

Tuesday and Thursdays: 2:30-6:30 PM

Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays: 9:15 AM-- 12:30 PM Looking for a special gift: 614-882-5257; style="color: blue;">s

Bulletin

Articles for the bulletin must be submitted two weeks in advance to stpaulcommunications@stpacc.org. Thank you!

Important Contacts

 Parish Office
 614-882-2109

 St. Paul School
 614-882-2710

 Preschool
 614-394-9731

 Parish School of Religion
 614-882-5045

Prayer Line stpaulprayerline@stpacc.org

St. Vincent DePaul Helpline 614-973-9772

Young Adults StPaulYA1@gmail.com

Spirit of Peace Counseling stpacc.org/counseling-services

Pregnancy Support Resources

Women's Care Center 614-251-0200
Birthright 614-221-0844
PDHC 614-444-4411
Mommies Matter 614-723-9308

Option Line <u>optionline.org</u> 1-800-712-4357

Stowe Mission, Columbus 614-445-8400 Pregnancy Resources of 740,447,0750

Delaware County

740-417-9358

THE CATECHETICAL CORNER



Dad?

I have a confession to make. This confession concerns a controversial topic that some people might tar and feather me over. I did not see a single Star Wars film until I was 25 years old. The idea of science fiction never interested me, so I never watched them. Upon dating my now-wife, she was horrified that I had never seen a single film. So, one day, we sat down and watched them. I will not tell you in what order I watched them because I hear that is another controversial topic. Well, I must say, you could have knocked me over with a feather when Darth Vader dropped the bomb that he was Luke's father. The name "father" is such an intimate word. It connotes a deep sense of connection, safety, and love, all of which Vader lacked. We call our earthly parents "mother" and "father." We call God "Our Father." So, if we have the word "father" in our lexicon, and we have people to attribute this name to, why does Jesus tell us to call no man "father?"

If Jesus's purpose were to banish the use of the word "father" in reference to human males, then it would seem the other New Testament authors never got the memo. In the New Testament alone, there are 195 uses of the word "father(s)" to refer to earthly human males. Therefore, it seems clear that understanding our Lord's word as an absolute banishment of the term for anyone but God is not supported by the practice evident in Scripture itself. St. Paul even referred to himself as a father: "...you have many guides but not many fathers, for I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel (1 Cor 4:15). For you know how like a father with his children we exhorted and charged each one of you to lead a life worthy of God (1 Thess 2:10). Timothy...as a son with a father has served me in the gospel (Phil 2:22).

When Jesus said "call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven," he used an expression that has deep roots in the Old Testament. To "call" someone by a "name" in the Hebrew tradition meant something closer to "identifying the essence," "the being" of a person.

For example, when the prophet Isaiah says of the Messiah that "his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," he certainly does not mean that those titles will be commonly used as names of the Messiah. None of Jesus' contemporaries, not even his Apostles, called him those things. Instead, the "name" here means the essence, and Isaiah is describing the nature of the Messiah, who will be, in his very nature, the "Mighty God" who shares the essence of the "Wonderful Counselor" (the Holy Spirit) and the "Everlasting Father" (God the Father). All other fathers, even one's biological father, are imitation fathers because God is the true Father who begets children in a way that only he, as God, can. When you were conceived, God created your soul ex nihilo, "from nothing."

When we address our priests as "father," we acknowledge their role as spiritual guides and shepherds entrusted with the care of our souls. Just as a loving father provides for the needs of his children and offers them guidance and support, so too do our priests nurture us in our faith journey, offering us the sacraments, teaching us God's Word, and leading us closer to Christ. For example, when a priest baptizes a baby, he brings about a new spiritual life. He is "birthing" a soul through the Word and the Spirit, moving it from death into life. This is more like how God creates a soul than biological procreation. True fatherhood is spiritual. In calling our priests "father," we recognize the paternal love and compassion they extend to us, mirroring the love of our Heavenly Father. Their ministry brings us God's grace and mercy, helping us experience his forgiveness and healing.

But beyond the individual priest, the title "father" also speaks to the communal aspect of our faith. As members of the Church, we are part of a spiritual family, with our priests serving as spiritual fathers to the entire community. They unite us in prayer, inspire us with their preaching, and bind us in the bond of Christ's love. Also, when we address our priests as "father," we affirm our trust in their authority and wisdom as ordained ministers of the Gospel. We recognize their sacred calling to lead and guide us by the teachings of the Church, helping us navigate life's challenges and grow in holiness.

Let us never take for granted the gift of the word "father." Whether referring to our Heavenly Father, biological father, priests, or Darth Vader, we must understand the role of "father" in our lives. We need to pray to and pray for our fathers. Through our prayers, we will one day see the Father who gave us our being.

Andrew 7. Burson

Andrew T. Burson, Director of Parish Ministry



The Appeal is an annual call to action, uniting the 23 counties of the Diocese of Columbus to provide for our essential mission and amplify our impact on Evangelization, Vocations, Catholic Education, and Social Needs.



Evangelization

Supports a new marriage preparation program and provides support for parish evangelization staff, among other efforts of the Department of Evangelization



Vocations

Provides for seminarian education and ongoing formation for our priests and deacons, among other efforts of the Office of Vocations



Catholic Education

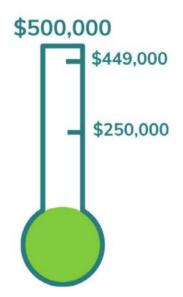
Provides tuition assistance for students in our Catholic schools and provides continuing education for teachers, among other efforts of the Office of Catholic Schools



Social Needs

Provides for Catholic prison and hospital chaplains and supports the St. Francis Evangelization Center in Vinton County, among other efforts of the Office of Social Concerns and Catholic Social Services

Our Parish Update



\$449,000 Diocesan Goal + \$51,000 Gym Renovation Goal \$500,000 Total Goal

Number of St Paul families: 4,232

2023 The Appeal participation: 922 families

2023 The Appeal participation rate: 22%

Give to The Appeal and support Catholic ministries

197 E Gay Street, Columbus, OH 43215 | columbuscatholicgiving.org/appeal



This Week in Our Parish

Sunday, May 5

Coffee & Doughnuts after AM Masses Lower Level Room 3 (Church)

7:30 AM - 5:00 PM Saint Vincent de Paul Thrift Store Trailer in Church Parking Lot

11:00 AM – RCIA Klinger Center

Interested in becoming Catholic or learning more about the Catholic faith? Learn more about the RCIA process at stpacc.org/rcia

6:00 PM – Alcoholics Anonymous Room 2 (Parish Office)

6:15 PM – Middle School Youth Ministry Klinger Center

Our Youth Ministry's mission is to bring the youth of our parish into a deep and personal relationship with Jesus by giving opportunities to have an authentic encounter with Christ through His Church. Ends at 7:45 PM. stpacc.org/ym

Monday, May 6

3:00 PM - Divine Mercy Chaplet Church

The Divine Mercy Chaplet is prayed every weekday at 3 PM in the church. Join us in praying this devotion to the mercy of God! Learn the prayers at stpacc.org/chaplet

6:30 PM - Rosary Church

Join us in this timeless prayer, enriching your spiritual life as we contemplate the life of Christ through the eyes of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

7:00 PM - Nar-Anon Room 1 (Parish Office)

Tuesday, May 7

3:00 PM - Divine Mercy Chaplet Church

7:00 PM - Rosary Making Group Lower Level Room 4 (Church)

7:00 PM - St. Vincent de Paul (Parish Office) Room 2

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7:30 PM - Young Adult Open Gym Klinger Center

Wednesday, May 8

3:00 PM – Divine Mercy Chaplet Church

6:45 PM - 8:00 PM High School Discipleship Lower Level Room 3 (Church)

7:00 PM — Overeaters Anonymous Parish Office Room 2

7:00 PM - Bereavement Ministry Spring Support Group Lower Level Room 2 (Church)

7:00 PM - France Pilgrimage Information Meeting Lower Level Room 3 (Church)

7:00 PM - Young Adults Theology Talk St. Peter Room

Thursday, May 9

6:00 AM – Into the Breach - That Man is You! St. Peter Room

9:15 AM - Confessions Church

Catholics can experience healing through forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God and His Church. Catholics are always welcomed back to receive this sacrament - whether it has been two weeks or two decades since the last Confession.

stpacc.org/sacraments/reconciliation

9:30 AM – Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Church

Spend some time in the real presence of Jesus after the 8:30 AM Mass. Adoration concludes with benediction at 5:45 PM.

10:00 AM - Prayer Shawl Ministry Lower Level Room 4 (Church)

3:00 PM - Divine Mercy Chaplet Church

7:00 PM – Adult Choir Rehearsal Church

7:00 PM - Knights of Columbus Business Meeting Lower Level Room 3 (Church)

7:00 PM - Young Adults Bible Study Lower Level Room 1 (Church)

7:30 PM Al-Anon Room 1 (Parish Office)

Friday, May 10

No Divine Mercy Chaplet

6:30 PM - High School Youth Ministry St. Peter Room

Ends at 8:30

7:30 PM-Alcoholics Anonymous Room 2 (Parish Office)

Saturday, May 11

7:00 AM - Men's Bible Study St. Peter Room

We invite all men in the parish to join us on the second, third, fourth and fifth Saturdays (if applicable) of the month for Bible Study stpacc.org/menbiblestudy

2:30 PM - Confessions Church

Sunday, May 12, Mother's Day

SVDP Food Pantry Drive

Bins will be in the vestibule of the church for your donations of food and toiletry items for the many in need.

6:00 PM – Alcoholics Anonymous Room 2 (Parish Office)

Marian Gift Shop

-INSIDE ST. PAUL CHURCH -

Religious Gifts for Every Occasion

Crucifixes • Religious Jewelry • Rosaries • Sacred Art Bibles • Catholic Books • Devotionals • Inspirational Gifts





Inspired by Saint Paul - Centered on Christ - Called to Holiness









National Eucharistic Pilgrimage



All are invited to join Bishop Earl K. Fernandes, the faithful from the Diocese of Columbus, and the pilgrims from The National Eucharistic Revival for a weeklong Eucharistic procession from June 24th to 30th through the Diocese of Columbus, while on pilgrimage to the National Eucharistic Congress. Stops along the way will be; St. Joseph, Somerset; St. Francis de Sales, Newark; Seton Parish, Pickerington; Christ the King, Columbus; St. Charles Preparatory School, Columbus; St. Paul the Apostle, Westerville; St. Joseph Cathedral, Columbus.

The pilgrimage will stop at St. Paul on Saturday, June 29. Events will include Eucharistic Adoration, Mass with Bishop Earl K. Fernandes followed by Eucharistic Procession, and a vocations fair.



For those who are unable to clearly hear the priest's homily or the beautiful choir while at Mass, we encourage you to acquire the FREE Listen EVERYWHERE app that brings clear audio to your smartphone.

Simply download the app by scanning the QR code, then plug in either your earphones, or connect your hearing aid or cochlear implant via Bluetooth



Be sure your device is connected to our Wi-Fi so the app can connect to our audio channel:

Network Name: St. Paul Church Guest Password: WelcomeHome.

10 Inspired by Saint Paul - Centered on Christ - Called to Holiness





Parish School of Religion (PSR) Help Needed

We are looking to hire someone to work in the PSR Office as the Coordinator of Religious Education for grades K-2. The ideal candidate is a practicing Catholic who knows and understands the Catholic Church and its mission. We are looking for someone with a background in education, religious education, and/or a related field. Responsibilities include implementing the Religious Education Curriculum for grades K-2 with extra guidance for preparing for First Holy Communion and working with our catechists who deliver weekly instruction to students. Candidates should possess computer and organizational skills. This position is part-time and flexible, up to 20 hours per week, with attendance required at Wednesday afternoon/evening PSR classes with some weekend hours. Those interested in learning more about this position should contact Susan Streitenberger, Director of Religious Education, at sstreitenberger@stpacc.org or 614-882-5045.

St. Paul the Apostle's Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Our Recent Mass Attendance & Offertory Collection

Week Ending	Count	Collections			
March 31	6,251	\$	71,959.65		
April 7	3,436	\$	130,474.62		
April 14	3,254	\$	95,566.02		
April 21	3,378	\$	51,320.60		

Year to Date Collection Summary through April 21, 2024

Note: Collection totals vary primarily due to the timing of online contribution reporting.

Summary for Week # 42		Actual		Budget		Difference		Last Year Actual		Prior Year +(-)	
Sunday & On-line Collections	\$	3,173,035	s	3,286,177	\$	(113,141)	\$	2,974,639	\$	198,396	
Christmas	\$	86,383	\$	85,000	\$	1,383	\$	83,782	\$	2,601	
Easter	\$	37,716	\$	38,000	\$	(284)	\$	20,770	\$	16,946	
Major Collection Totals	\$	3,297,134	\$	3,409,177	\$	(112,043)	\$	3,079,191	\$	217,944	
Prior Week Totals	\$	2,998,183	\$	3,207,935	\$	(209,752)	\$	2,801,105	\$	197,078	

Special Collections To Date Include: St. Vincent DePaul \$ 72,273 WARM \$ 61,850 Parish Mission \$ 7.367

*Church Building Fund Envelopes: \$ 71,523 Church Loan Balance: \$3,592,978

*Parish fiscal year is July 1 to June 30

Our Offertory Weekly Goal is \$78,244.
This amount includes weekly withdrawals for:

Accelerated Principal Payments on Debt of \$ 7,750
Savings Deposit to our Emergency Fund of \$ 7,900



Why use offertory envelopes when you can give online via WeShare? It's a safe and convenient platform. Text stpaulohio to 800-950-9952 or simply go to stpacc.org/donate.





Museum of Catholic Art and History Gala

Make an impact! The Museum of Catholic Art and History's Gala "A Night at the Statehouse" is Tuesday, May 21, 5:30-7:30 p.m., at the Ohio Statehouse, 1 Capitol Square, Columbus. This magnificent evening features a presentation by the Most Reverend Bishop Earl K. Fernandes, a keynote address by retired U.S. Congressman and Catholic man Pat Tiberi, great food and beverages, fine music, and more. Tickets are \$100 for individuals, \$175 for couples. The Museum, which has been owned by Bishop of Columbus for many years now, holds the largest collection of Catholic art and history in the U.S. and shares this vital collection with people of all ages from all walks of life.



1

CONNECTING THE WORD OF GOD TO OUR LIVES

From www.mycatholic.life



Reflecting on the Gospel for the Sixth Sunday of Easter, May 5, 2024

First Reading: Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48; Second Reading: 1 John 4:7-10; Gospel: John 15:9-17

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus says, "You are my friends if you do what I command you." Is that the measure of true friendship? That we do what our friend commands us to do? That depends upon which friend we are speaking about.

There are many images we use for God. We call Him Father, Savior, Master, Lord, King, Redeemer, Spirit and Friend. When it comes to God as our divine Friend, it is important to understand the nature of that friendship properly. Jesus' friendship is not one that simply makes us "buddies." Friendship with our Lord is not the same as a friendship between two equals. He is God. And because He is God, our friendship with Him takes on unique characteristics that are not present in other friendships. With that said, there could be no greater friend than the Lord Himself.

Among humans, our friendships have various foundations. It could be that two people have mutual interests and they enjoy engaging in those interests together. It could be that two people have spent much pleasant time together since childhood. Or it could be that two people have endured some difficulty together and that experience has bonded them together. But according to Saint Thomas Aquinas, friendship in its purest form is based on just one thing: mutual charity.

Charity is the form of love that is purely selfless. It's a way of relating to another in which a person's sole focus is the good of the other. It is not based on one's own self interests. It's not a matter of "what do I get out of it?" In 1 Corinthians 13:4–8, St. Paul defines the love of charity this way: "Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, it is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails." This is not only the definition of charity, it is also the only foundation for true friendship.

When you consider all of these qualities of charity, you will find that God relates to us in each of these ways. For that reason, God offers us the purest friendship possible. Whether or not we reciprocate these qualities to God will determine the depth of the bond of friendship that we establish with Him. But there is more. When we love God, we must love Him in a way that is proper and proportionate to Who God is. For example, if we offer charity to God, we seek to fulfill only God's interests and rejoice in the Truth of Who He is. Thus, the charity we offer to God comes in the form of worship. He is God and is worthy of worship, adoration, surrender, trust and perfect obedience. When it is God we are loving, the very essence of the Person we love requires these responses.

One beautiful and consoling thing to recognize with this form of charity given to God is that it also establishes a true friendship with God. When we offer our worship to God, we are in a position to receive the very life of God in return. And the giving of ourselves, coupled with the reception of the life of God, establishes a bond of holy friendship that will transform us, unite us with Him and fulfill us to perfection. Friendship with God makes us one with Him and opens us to receive everything that He shares with us—namely, His very Self.

Reflect, today, upon the invitation Jesus has offered you to enter into a true friendship with Him. This means that God becomes the center of your life. It means that you seek to give yourself, selflessly and without reserve, to Him Who is deserving of all your love. It means you choose worship and obedience to perfection. The reward of such love is that you are able to enter into a bond that is so holy, so pure and so fulfilling that it completes you, enabling you to become who you were meant to be.

My God and true Friend, You offer me everything in life. You offer me Your perfect love, given fully and without reserve. I pray that I will reciprocate that depth of love and offer to You all that You deserve. I offer You my love, worship and obedience, dear Lord. May this mutual love form a bond that will never end. Jesus, I trust in You.

Readings for each day and links to daily reflections can be found at stpacc.org/readings

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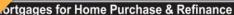


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