



Embracing God's People • Equipping Disciples • Accompanying Believers

August 15, 2020

Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

August is quickly slipping past us and that leaves me scratching my head wondering where the time has gone? It feels especially odd in these COVID-times for some reason. Perhaps it's because along with the usual August activities, preparing to re-open school, working with parish staff to prepare for the new academic year and the many different calendars that vie for attention, we are also preparing for significant transitions here at the parish.

As most of you are aware, our wonderfully gifted Liturgy Coordinator, Mary Janus, passed away in July. She was more than a parish liturgist, but also directed both our Family Choir (9am Sunday Mass) and our Harmonia Choir (5:30pm Sunday Mass).

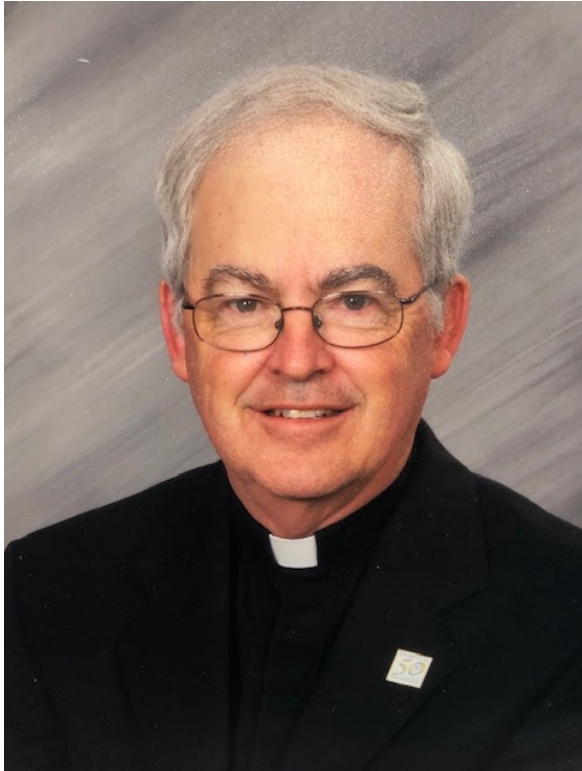
Mary was a valued and senior member of the Parish leadership team. Her work at the parish was a small part of her contribution to the life of the Church both within the Archdiocese and even across the country, through her collaboration with, and support of, church musicians near and far.

Mary is already greatly missed, and it falls to me now to begin to make arrangements to ensure the work she undertook in service of our community is appropriately attended to.



I am most grateful to her colleagues in music ministry here at Lourdes, who have been so supportive and who have endeavored to ensure that even in these crazy COVID times our parish music ministry continues to enhance our (zoom) liturgies.

Opportunity to Make Farewell



I have been receiving inquiries about how we are planning to acknowledge and express our gratitude for the gift of Fr. Dan's service to us for these past four years. He is preparing to take up his new assignment as Chaplain at Nazareth House, an assisted living facility on LA's westside.

At this time, we are looking forward to hosting a **"drive-by"** farewell for Fr. Dan on **Saturday evening, August 22nd, at 7pm.** Fr. Dan will be available by Room 4 of the Moran Center.

All traffic entering the parking lot is asked to approach from the East along Kinzie Street. Enter through the main entrance (beside the "Field"), and you will be directed to follow a path along by the school building, before turning left toward the gate beside the Moran Center. All traffic will exit by the Parish Office, and out onto Superior St.

Outdoor Liturgies - Update

As you may have already read in our "mid-week" letter, we successfully commenced the celebration of daily Eucharist (Monday - Friday) at 6:30am on the patio of the Church. Neighboring parishes offer mass at a later time, and we hope this in-person time will facilitate those who are commuting to work, for whom the later masses are not an option. Some ingenuity and reconfiguring of the space (Thanks Greg Davies) has allowed us to accommodate increased numbers of people in the event such is needed.

Despite the extreme heat advisory, we are also launching our Sunday morning outdoor liturgy at 8:00am. Details for this launch were included in our email of last Wednesday, but if you missed it, you can still read it on our [parish website](#).



I want to thank everyone who shared their input in preparation for this transition. Though we have some unique challenges here at Lourdes relative to setting up for an outdoor liturgy at this time of the year, we're going to plough ahead and learn as we go. As always, God is good and provides for all our needs. This is as true now as it has always been.

Infant Baptism Outdoors

Last weekend saw us celebrate our first infant baptism since last March. Once more, it took place on our Church patio, and was a joyous occasion for the family involved.

Anyone wishing to plan or schedule an infant baptism is invited to reach out to Anne Wing awing@ollnr.org, and she will be happy to assist in your planning.

Livestreaming Liturgies

The prohibition on large gatherings of people necessitated by public health orders has been quite challenging for all of us. Relative to Church, we've all been able to tell stories of what we miss and what we can't do, or have. Parishioners can't receive communion, and priests at the altar can't enjoy the communion of Eucharist for which a congregation is essential. The Body of Christ has been greatly impacted by COVID-19.

During these past months, as many of you are already aware, we have been using the Zoom platform to stream our masses while the Church buildings have been closed to public participation in the Eucharist. Very soon I anticipate transitioning to a fully livestreamed experience that won't require the use of the Zoom platform, but which will allow us to follow along by simply going to our parish website. When we go "live" with this new system, we'll let everyone know ahead of time.

Those availing of the **Sacrament of Reconciliation** or **Confession** find the convenience of being able to do so according to their own schedule quite beneficial. Because of recent adaptations necessitated by COVID-related developments, and in light of continuous changes to county protocols, confessions now take place outdoors and at a mutually convenient time, and throughout the week. To avail of this opportunity, please email parishcenter@ollnr.org or call (818) 349-1500.

As everyone is well aware by now, the shifting realities and the resulting protocols we receive, and with which we strive to comply, are in constant flux. For this reason, it is always advisable to check the parish website or call the parish office for the most current information.

Parish Office Hours

The parish office continues to operate, serving parishioners, and meeting the needs of those who call upon us for assistance. For the most part, the office is being staffed remotely, but all its functions continue to be served. While in-person business is not possible at this time, anyone calling or emailing during regular office hours (8:30am - 5:30pm) is likely to receive a prompt response.

Staff, including myself, continue to be available for meetings with parishioners by phone or by zoom video-conferencing.

Gratitude

It is important to take a moment to acknowledge the contributions so many continue to make to support the ongoing work and ministries of our parish. Many parishioners go out of their way to get their offering envelopes to us here at the parish office. Some people have been writing and mailing encouraging notes to support our office staff, and they include their offerings. Many

others have signed up for automatic and sustained electronic giving using our FaithDirect offertory program. Your thoughtfulness, encouragement and generosity are greatly appreciated especially by those whom we support in our outreach, as well as by the employees and their families who rely on our Church as their employer.

If you're one of those who now uses FaithDirect, please share how easy it is with your fellow parishioners. I encourage everyone to [sign up for FaithDirect](#) for easy online giving.



For those who wish to make a single, one-time offering, please take advantage of the "Text-to-Give" option.

The Complexities Present in Debate about St. Junipero Serra

At our Tuesday morning "Coffee in the Vestry" a question was asked about the recent discussion and debates about the removal of statues of, and references to, St. Junipero Serra from public places, including, it appears, the Seal of the County of Ventura.

I confess to being someone who loves history and who enjoys wading into the complexities of reading and learning from our past. I tend to hold that if we are not aware of our past then we will struggle to understand how we got to where we are and orient ourselves well for our future. I regret that the current debate about Serra and his contribution to the life and development of our state has recently tended to focus on and respond to public pressure being exerted by some groups without consideration of history or context. Some of these groups tend to sound somewhat bigoted or anti-Catholic, while some tend to be anti-Native American, or focus on assertion of First Amendment rights. I find neither of these positions to be particularly helpful in the context of this debate.

On the same day as that conversation, I received in my email a note about an article written by Robert Senkewicz, Professor of History Emeritus at the University of Santa Clara. He has studied and authored texts on the life of Junipero Serra, and his recent article "[St. Junípero Serra Between Conversion and Colonialism](#)" can be found in the Church Life Journal, published by the McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame. Another document that might be worth reading is the [statement by our own Archbishop Gomez](#) on the debate. It's referenced in an article available on the website of the National Catholic Reporter entitled "[Controversial Junípero Serra supported by some Indigenous Catholics, California mission workers](#)"

History is complex, and while we may have grown used to sound-bites that pretend to be engaging and which may even sound persuasive in our current realities, they rarely help us to navigate complexities with justice and understanding to serve us well into our future.

The Further Adventures of Mollie Loftus



My niece has been laying pretty low this past week and it probably no wonder. She had a very exciting few weeks recently, spending some vacation time with her grandparents, going off on adventures with her aunties, helping to celebrate her Dad's 40th birthday, hanging with her cousins, and eventually returning to the relative quiet of her own home.

I guess I'm reminded once more of how even in these crazy times, and despite the many restrictions we face, and the compromises we make because of COVID-19 and its effects, it is important for us to not lose sight of what we do actually have, and what we are able to accomplish. Mollie's recent activities serve to remind me (once again) that the simple things in life are often the most enjoyable, and that time shared with family and friends, whether in person, by phone, in email or by text, or even - dare I suggest - in an old-fashioned letter in the mail, is never to be taken for granted. The relatively simple things in our lives, like attending to the people who are nearest and dearest to us, can be most salubrious for us.

So if you happen to feel yourself succumbing to the temptation of these COVID times to be downcast in spirit, take note and respond by doing something positive to reach out to family or friends. Take control of the moment and use it to improve the day of both the person you reach out to, and yourself.

On that note, friends, I pray continued blessings on you and yours.

Fr. David