

[Readings: Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47; Eph 1:17-23; Luke 24-46-53]

You are standing in the airport terminal, looking up as the plane rises. You are on your front porch, waving to the taxi as it pulls away. You look out the review mirror as you pull away to see your new college student looking homesick already. You are the last person walking away from the casket as you leave the cemetery chapel. You might think to yourself, “Great! What are we gonna do NOW?” Have you ever had that reaction to someone who has left us, who is going to be away from us for a while, who might even be away from us for good?” We needed that boss, that pope, that bishop, that pastor. We needed that dad, that mom, that child. That brother or sister. I needed that job. I needed that employee. “Great. What are we gonna do NOW?”

What do we do when our plans, our security, our lives suddenly change, and we realize it will never again be the same? We welcome, we receive and we are open to the Holy Spirit that Jesus promises us He will send us. That promised Spirit will show us the way, give us strength in times of weakness, hope in times of fear or anxiety, and deeper meaning to life in all situations.

Believe it or not, Jesus was limited here on earth by His physical body. After His ascension into heaven and the sending forth of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ can be and IS with us today – in the Seven Sacraments, in the way WE proclaim the Gospel, and in the myriad of ways we give witness to Him by our actions, our ministry and our service.

Pope Francis reminds us that the Ascension does not point to Jesus’ absence, but tells us that He is alive in our midst in a new way. He is no longer in a specific place in the world as He was before the Ascension. He is now present in every space and time, close to each one of us” (Pope Francis, General Audience, April 17th, 2013).

As we celebrate the Ascension of the Lord, we think not only about the last moments of Jesus' time among His disciples, but also of the beginning of their task as preachers of His word.

From the night of the Last Supper through His arrest, trial, torture and crucifixion, they had suffered fear, cowardice, guilt and confusion. With Christ's Resurrection and His appearance to them, they knew that everything He had said was real, and that He Himself was the Truth. In the glory of Jesus, Son of God and of Man, they experienced mercy and compassion. "Then He led them out as far as Bethany, raised His hands, and blessed them. As He blessed them He parted from them and was taken up to heaven. They did Him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (Luke 24:50-52).

His Apostles and other followers must have experienced a natural sadness that their cherished Lord was departing from them. Yet the wonder of knowing that He was the Son of God and Redeemer of the world... that He has chosen them as the first members of His Church... and that He was sending them out to invite others into a personal relationship with Him, filled them with happiness. It is a joy that is open to all of us who embrace belief in Christ our Lord and offer it to others.

"Taken up," the word that we translate as "Ascension" comes from the Greek verb *anapherein* (to go up, to be carried up) which suggests a progressive action, but is in the passive form. That means that someone else is doing it, and it's still going on right now. God is doing it. And it's happening to us right now!

So, "What are we gonna do NOW?" May you and I be in a constant process of being "carried up" into heaven by the Father Who loves us, by the Son Who teaches us, and by the Holy Spirit, for Whom we await a great outpouring of grace on Pentecost Sunday. May we realize that the glorified Jesus is not away from us, but beside us, and within us, leading us to our Eternal Home. Let us pray for all of today's missionaries as we recall the first followers of our Lord to spread the faith. We can also give them material support by contributing through the annual Missionary Cooperation Plan to support the Piarist Mission. AMEN!
ALLELUIA!

[Readings: Acts 2:1-11; Psalm 104; 1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13; John 20:19-23]

For the last four years, on Pentecost Sunday, I have given an annual “State of the Parish” Report on how things have been progressing in our parish over the past twelve months. I need to forgo that this year, because on a larger scale, something Spirit-driven has been happening in our Archdiocese of Detroit for the past five years. Leading to Synod 2016, culminating in the pastoral letter from Archbishop Allen Vigneron: “Unleash the Gospel” and challenging every parish in the Archdiocese – including ours -- to move from a stagnant vision of spiritual maintenance to one of spiritual *mission*. *Maintenance* means to keep an eye on things as they are, with improvements or repairs only as needed. *Mission* means to think and pray outside the box. To renovate our broken hearts. To bring hope to the hopeless. My understanding is that this process has two directives or goals – personal conversion or reversion back to the practice of the faith, including a deeper relationship with the Lord, with Mary, His Mother, with the Communion of Saints, and within ourselves. Has this happened to you yet? If not, why not? What can we do to help make this happen? Something to pray about, to discern and to decide about!

The second directive or goal is for you and for me to go out into the world, to give witness, to attract others to Jesus Christ and to “renew the face of the earth” in the Spirit. We can start simply by learning each other’s names.

Whenever I begin or end a parish assignment, I always ask the parishioners in the beginning to keep telling me their name, so that I will remember them. If they don’t know what to say to me when I am leaving a parish, I simply ask them once again to tell me their name, so at least I can call them by name when saying good-bye. At every parish, I always mention, “I will remember your name, if you are a very good person, and especially if you are a very bad person.” So when I call someone by name, the first thing they say to me is, “OK, Father, which is it, am I good or am I bad?” And I say, “Yes...”

One of the reasons for this Name Tag Sunday is to introduce ourselves to each other just in case we don't know each other by name. I know this is done even without name tags in some churches on Sundays.

The well-meaning priest says to the congregation at the beginning of Mass: "Take a moment now to introduce yourselves to each other." Then, sometimes mockingly or to be cute, a married couple will say their names to each other, or brothers and sisters will say each other's name.

But then, there just might be that one person who always comes to church alone, who may have recently lost a parent, a spouse or a child to death, or whose only physical contact every week is with you and me in church. And when their face lights up when the person who has been sitting next to them or behind them or in front of them after months or years calls them by name, THAT, my friends, is the reason for this Name Tag Sunday!

Each parish in the Archdiocese is preparing to enter a new stage of "Unleash the Gospel." How will our parishes put "Unleash the Gospel" into practice in our homes, our families, our neighborhood, our communities? Here is what the Archbishop is telling us:

June 8, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Praise be to Jesus Christ, now and forever!

At the first Pentecost, Christ came to His apostles and breathed onto them the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

He breathes on us today, his faithful in the Archdiocese of Detroit. We find ourselves very much like the apostles who were gathered in a room. Like them, our hearts rejoice when we encounter Jesus. Like them, he sends us on a mission and gives us his Holy Spirit so that we may go out and Unleash the Gospel. God is pouring out his Spirit so we can continue the work of the apostles. The Spirit enables us to proclaim the Good News to those in our families, workplaces and communities. The Holy Spirit, our Advocate, gives us the courage to continue our missionary journey.

And on this day, I would like to announce the **next phase of our movement to Unleash the Gospel: the renewal of our parishes**. For the Gospel to truly be unleashed, we must re-found our parishes so that everything we do — how we pray, how we minister, how we serve — leads us to be more effective witnesses to the Gospel.

This next phase of our missionary journey will require prayer, innovation, and hard work so that our parish communities become what God made them to be: places where individuals and families encounter Jesus anew, grow as his disciples, and are equipped to be witnesses of the Risen Christ.

To spark this transformation, each parish in the Archdiocese will create a plan to realign all its activity and ministry to our shared mission to Unleash the Gospel. These missionary strategic plans will provide the direction and focus for each parish's missionary transformation.

Today, ten parishes in the Archdiocese will begin the process of creating these plans. I am grateful for the apostolic courage of these first pastors and their parishes. Other parishes will follow early next year and more will continue after.

This is nothing short of a complete overhaul of our Church in Detroit — a task too great to do on our own. But we are not alone. Christ is with us. We cannot fail, because we are in communion with the risen Jesus and we act in the power of his Spirit.

So, I ask you to join me in prayer. Let us pray for the Holy Spirit to come and transform our hearts and our parishes. Let us pray for boldness in our plans and efforts. Let us pray that each one of our parishes may discern how it is called to Unleash the Gospel with its unique set of gifts and circumstances.

As a parish and individually at home, from now and until the feast of Christ the King, let us join in this **Prayer for the Next Phase of Unleash the Gospel:**

*Heavenly Father,
Thank you for the abundant graces of Synod 16:
for awakening in us the vision and resolve
to become again your Church on mission,*

*eagerly working together to “make disciples of all nations,”
according to our commission from the Lord Jesus.
Pour out upon us your Holy Spirit, as a new Pentecost,
to guide us in our next phase in our movement to Unleash the Gospel.
By his power at work in us, transform our parishes
into bands of joyful missionary disciples.
Come Holy Spirit:
Set our hearts on fire to share the Good News of Jesus with all those
who stumble in darkness, who hunger for hope, who thirst for eternal life.
Above all, grant us the boldness and courage of the apostles
to put the mission above all else,
so that our community becomes the spark
to ignite the fire of divine love that transforms this time and this place
into the Kingdom of Heaven.
We pray through the intercession of Our Lady,
Star of the New Evangelization,
and her mother, our Patron, St. Anne;
and in the spirit of Blessed Solanus we thank you ahead of time
for “accomplishing in us far more than all we ask or imagine.”
We ask all of this in the all-powerful name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns forever.
Amen.*

Sincerely yours in Christ, The Most Reverend Allen H. Vigneron
Archbishop of Detroit.

Copies of this prayer are available at the Sunday Offering boxes at the ends of the aisles. I ask every person to take one prayer card each. So that couples and single people may pray this prayer at home. So that families may pray this prayer together. Please pray this prayer daily if possible, or at least once a week. Prayer will change our hearts, our community and our world!

Come, Holy Spirit, Come! AMEN! ALLELUIA!

[Readings: Proverbs 8:22-31; Psalm 8; Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15]

About twenty years ago, a book came out called "The Shack." It was such a popular book that a movie was made of it ten years later. The book was given to me by a friend to help me in my spiritual journey. And I saw the movie. I'm not recommending that you see the movie. But if you do, a couple of disclaimers. First of all, some theological ideas offered in the book do not coincide with our Catholic theology. Secondly, there are characters presented in a controversial and challenging way. But the movie does have two powerful scenes that tie in to today's Feast of the Most Holy Trinity.

The story focusses on Mac, the father of two young children who goes camping with his family at a nearby lake. An unspeakable tragedy happens involving his little girl, who is kidnapped, raped and in killed in a rundown shack not too far away. Several months after the tragedy, Mac receives a letter in the mailbox which sits at the edge of the street in a mound of fresh snow. Mac notices that there are no footprints in the snow, but that the mailbox door is open, and a white envelope rests within.

The envelope has a single sheet with the simple message, "Mac, meet me at the Shack. God." Mac wrestles with the invitation and finally decides to go alone. As he arrives at the crime scene, traumatic memories and feelings boil over. He then sees a man who looks a lot like Jesus Christ, who invites Mac to his cottage for a meal. As Mac enters the cottage, he sees two other people sitting with Jesus at the table. One is called Papa, but looks like a large black woman. The other person at the table is a woman who looks like she is from India or Pakistan. She is the Holy Spirit. As the three sit and interact, Mac is impressed with the peace, joy and fraternity of the three. What a wonderful image of the indwelling of the Holy Trinity! Mac asks, "All right, which one of you is God?" All three answer: "I am!" As the story progresses, Mac begins to relate to each of them. They help Mac come to healing, reconciliation, and peace. When Mac asks Papa why he doesn't look like God the Father, she replies, "Because you have Daddy Issues you haven't resolved yet. You can't see me as a father. But you will."

Each one of the Trinity in their own way are able to touch Mac's pain, to feel his pain, and to restore his broken relationship with God. It is a beautiful image of The Trinity all working to love us. We know the Lord is with us the whole time. That is what Mac

discovers in this Trinitarian experience. He discovers that we have this most gracious God.

I love the character in the movie, Papa. She is a very gracious and loving woman. She says over and over again throughout the movie to Mac, "Mac, I'm especially fond of you." Any time anybody's name is mentioned, she says, "You know, I'm especially fond of that person." Mac finally says, "Is there anyone you're not especially fond of?" Then God the Father says, "Haven't found him yet."

We have this God that is especially fond of you. He is so gracious to you. God the Father is so gracious. Jesus is so gracious. The Holy Spirit is so gracious. They are all just spilling out with grace for you. God wants to welcome all of us to the table of the Lord. Ultimately, this is the table where you get to experience the graciousness of God.

The kindness of God. God who is slow to anger and rich in mercy. Right here, we get to experience the love of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

As Mac grapples with trying to get to know each one, there is a scene in the movie where he sits next to Jesus. He said "Listen, I feel comfortable with you. I am not sure about those two yet." I think it is true with all of us. We tend to have a more comfortable connection with a person of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit. My invitation to you is to ask whomever you are more comfortable with. If you feel the closest to Jesus, just say, "Jesus, tell me about the Father or reveal to me the Holy Spirit." Because God sent His only Son into the world to reveal the Father to us so we can truly know, once and for all, what God is like. Reflect on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. What your relationship is like with each one of them. If you notice that one is weaker, to ask God to help you grow in that. I myself feel most strongly connected to the Holy Spirit. I'm pretty good with Jesus. But I'm still working out my own Daddy Issues with the Father!

That is the whole essence of liturgy and of prayer. On the Feast of the Trinity, I invite you to reconnect and to have that deeper relationship with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Because today is Father's Day, I close with a short comment about fatherhood on this Father's Day written by Dr. Greg Popcak, a family counsellor and psychiatrist.

Canada made news recently for its new rules forbidding government workers from using “gender-biased” terms like “mother” and “father” when conducting official business. What used to be honorable titles for thousands of years are now considered “gender-biased.” In the United States, there is a growing movement encouraging the use of “Parent 1” and “Parent 2” on birth certificates.

In this brave new world, it would seem that our culture has decided that it is well past time to proclaim motherhood and fatherhood to be indistinguishable and interchangeable. This would all be well and good if science wasn't consistently showing that fathers and mothers bring different gifts to the parenting table and that children raised in households without one or the other do not fare as well as children raised in homes with both. Fortunately, although it may no longer be politically correct to do so, it is at least still legal to celebrate Father's Day. It might be a good idea to take advantage of this freedom while it still exists, and reflect on what science says about why dads matter.

A 2013 study improved upon previous research and affirmed that strong paternal involvement in girls' lives significantly decreased the risk that they would engage in early or high-risk sexual activity. Previous research has shown that involved fathering tends to inhibit promiscuity in both adolescent boys and girls.

A 2018 study in the journal *Academic Pediatrics* found even when children are raised in households with involved mothers that also having an involved father increases the likelihood that children will show better cognitive development, as well as improved mental and physical health outcomes.

The presence of an involved, caring father significantly decreases the risk of delinquency and substance abuse in adolescent boys. Mothering gives children the ability to tolerate stress more effectively, nurturing fathers give a greater capacity to regulate aggression. Children who have a close relationship with an involved father are twice as likely to go to college and find stable employment after high school as those children who do not have a loving father in their lives. Together, moms' and dads' unique gifts help kids develop a full range of language skills.

Multiple studies have shown that even in households where mothers are active in their faith, it is the father's level of involvement in a faith tradition that most consistently predicts whether a child will come to own their family's faith as an adult and allow their faith to have a practical impact on their life choices. While faithful moms convey a spiritual

sensitivity to their children, faithful dads influence the degree to which faith is practiced and lived in the world. The millennial epidemic of “spiritual but not religious” may be a direct result of the number of children raised in homes with religiously engaged mothers but religiously disengaged fathers.

The science is clear. Mothers and fathers are not interchangeable, nor are they replaceable. The loss of a mother or a father is devastating, and the benefits lost by the absence of a parent of either gender simply cannot be made up for by filling that space with another caregiver of the same gender. That isn't a judgment on the nurturing skills of that same-gendered caregiver. It's just science. It turns out that Mother Nature simply doesn't care about gender politics, no matter how much progressive culture warriors try to re-educate her.

So, even if it causes our too-hip-for-science friends to scowl at us, this Father's Day, let's celebrate the uniqueness of dads and rejoice in all the ways fatherhood is a blessing to our children. I conclude with these eight thank-you notes given by children to their fathers. The children range in age from grade school to adults.

Thank you, Dad, for giving your all at work and at home.

Thank you, Dad, for making sure we have everything we need.

Thank you, Dad, for leading our family in the ways of the Lord.

Thank you, Dad, for teaching us about Jesus.

Thank you, Dad, for making our home a place we want to be.

Thank you, Dad, for showing us how to fight hard and finish well.

Thank you, Dad, for helping us up when we fall.

Thank you, Dad, for believing in us and for being our #1 fan. AMEN!

[Readings: Genesis 14:18-20; Psalm 110; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; Luke 9:11b-17]

Timothy P. O'Malley, from the University of Notre Dame, recently made reference to a cover story in *The Atlantic* magazine written by a journalist and former priest, James Carrol

I. Mr. Carroll announced that he refuses to participate in Mass. Because of the abuse scandal, he has determined that only a total boycott of the Eucharist makes sense. Until the Church has rid herself of the priesthood, he sees no way forward. The temptation of any faithful Mass-goer is simply to dismiss Carroll. Over the years, his columns in the Boston Globe have exhibited a skinny grasp of both theology and ecclesial history alike.

At the same time, the article reveals a pain that many Catholics have experienced. When we discover that our prelates and our priests have abused young children, seminarians and disabled men and women, what do we do? Do we simply participate in the life of the Church as normal? Is there a fear that our normal participation communicates to ecclesial leaders that we're not that upset?

Keep the ship on the same course, because we'll be there no matter what happens. The feast of Corpus Christi is a reminder that many of us have been there all along and will continue to stay, even when the clergy are corrupt. We don't show up to church for excellent preaching. We don't show up for clerical virtue. We show up to give worship to God and because only in this place can we receive the gift beyond all gifts and love beyond all loves: the very sacrifice of Christ that renews the face of the earth.

In 1 Corinthians Chapter 11, St. Paul describes the words that he has received, the foundational story that is at the heart of the Eucharist. Jesus gave His body as bread. He gave His blood as wine. Each time we eat this bread, each time we drink this cup, we meet our risen Lord.

These words of institution, proclaimed daily at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, are why many of us will continue to show up at Mass. The corruption of the Church is not novel. A volume of church history could be written describing the corruption that has dwelt in the Church in every century. And yet, by the Holy Spirit, we are still here! Alive and living, if not totally well.

Still, the Lord Who offered Himself in love upon the cross continues to make Himself available to men, women and young people. He makes Himself available to the Church in every age because Jesus Christ loved us. He loved us unto the end.

We show up to Mass week after week, even in the midst of scandal, because we come to meet the Risen Lord made available in the Eucharist. The feast of Corpus Christi must challenge each of us to conform ourselves more fully to this mystery.

In Thomas Aquinas's sequence for the feast, *Lauda Sion*, we sing, "Very bread, good shepherd, tend us Jesus, of Your love befriend us, You refresh us, You defend us, Your eternal goodness sends us in the land of life to see."

Jesus Christ entered into a world that loved darkness. And still, Jesus Christ comes to us in a Church that often loves the world of darkness too much.

The Eucharist is therefore not a way of upholding the status quo. It is instead a radical challenge to any member of the Church -- clergy or lay -- who has forgotten that the God we worship is not one of power or prestige but love unto the end. This God comes to us week after week. Day after day. This God feeds us with His true flesh and His true blood.

Rather than rid us of the priesthood, as Carroll suggests, it is better to hold up this mystery of the Eucharist as the very meaning of the priesthood, bishops, cardinals and the papacy.

Tim O'Malley's answer to Carroll is that we need better priests. We need better Christians. Most importantly, we need the Eucharist.

Joseph Pronechen, a staff writer of the National Catholic Register, writes about the importance of the Eucharist through a history of miraculous events.

During the middle of the eighth century, a Basilian monk who was more oriented toward science than faith had persistent doubts about the reality of the bread and wine becoming Christ's true Body and true Blood at the consecration — until one particular Mass. As he pronounced the words of consecration, "suddenly the monk saw bread turn into Flesh and the wine into Blood," according to documents at the Sanctuary of the Eucharistic Miracle in Lanciano, Italy.

This was heaven's direct answer to the monk — belief quickly replaced his doubts as he invited those at Mass to come and contemplate the living God before their

eyes. The faithful can still do so in the Church of San Francesco in Lanciano over a dozen centuries later, as the preserved flesh and coagulated blood remain on display. TheRealPresence.org reports that tests found the flesh is indeed real human flesh. The blood is human blood, too, type AB, the same blood type found on the Shroud of Turin.

Furthermore, in 1973, the World Health Organization's board of governors chose a scientific commission to check the initial findings. After 500 examinations, they verified the 1971 findings, and "declared without doubt that it is a living tissue," reports the Lanciano shrine — and scientifically unexplainable.

The feast of Corpus Christi, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, has been celebrated since the mid-13th century and is unsurprisingly tied to a Eucharistic miracle. St. Juliana of Liege was told by Our Lord about the Eucharistic feast, and she asked Pope Urban IV to institute it for the universal Church.

Lanciano might be the most famous of all Eucharistic miracles, but there have been many over the centuries, including recent ones.

On Christmas Day 2013, a Eucharistic miracle took place in St. Hyacinth's Church in [Legnica, Poland](#), about 200 miles from Krakow. During Communion time, a Host accidentally fell to the floor. The priest at once placed it in a small container with water to dissolve the host and put it in the special sink to return it to the earth. But two weeks later, as the "Acutis Miracle" site explains, Father Andrzej Ziombra, accompanied by another priest, "noticed that the Host had not dissolved and that a red spot covering a fifth of its surface appeared," Father Ziombra reported.

"We decided to inform the bishop, who established a special theological scientific commission to analyze the event."

When two major forensic medicine institutes were asked to examine samples from the Host, both found it was composed of myocardial (heart) tissue. Even more, the second source at the Pomeranian Medical University's department further found it to be "human heart muscle with alterations that often appear during agony."

When we receive the Body of Christ, we receive a piece of His Sacred Heart when He suffered His agony on the cross! Once the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was given the results, it recognized this as a supernatural experience.

“Eucharistic miracles give us a reinforcement that the Eucharistic is a Person and that Person is coming through in the miracles,” explained Father Carlos Martins of the Companions of the Cross and director of the Treasures of the Church ministry. “It makes the Eucharist more ... the miracle affords that encounter with Christ be seen anew by people.”

At the parish of St. Mary in Buenos Aires, a Eucharistic miracle happened not once, but three times — in 1992, 1994, and on the Feast of the Assumption, Aug. 15, 1996, when a Host fell to the floor during Communion and then was placed in a container to dissolve. By Aug. 26, the Host had transformed into blood.

At the time the archbishop of Buenos Aires, Cardinal Jorge Maria Bergoglio, later our current Pope Francis, asked Professor Ricardo Castañon Gomez to examine and evaluate what had occurred. “The Eucharistic Miracles of the World” tour highlights the words of Castañon Gomez. Among his many findings: In 2000 a renowned expert on tissues found the samples to have human skin and white blood cells. In 2003 the same expert said the tissue was that of an inflamed heart, meaning “that the person to whom they belonged must have suffered a lot.”

In 2005, Castañon Gomez asked another top expert at Columbia University to investigate. That scientist pinpointed the tissue as from the heart, particularly the left ventricle, and labeled it still-living tissue that was from a suffering person.

Castañon Gomez concluded that the Lord “in the miracle wanted to show us his myocardium, which is the muscle that gives life to the whole heart, just as the Eucharist does with the Church. And why the left ventricle? Because from it comes the purified blood and Jesus is the one who purifies his Church from her sins.”

Through Eucharistic miracles, Jesus surely does strength our faith. AMEN!