



ASCENSION SUNDAY

May 12, 2024



Mission Statement

“Good Shepherd Parish, under the guidance of the true Shepherd Jesus Christ, is a Catholic faith based community seeking to proclaim and live the gospel message. Recognizing our diversity, we strive to bring together a church family, welcoming all people as we grow together in faith, hope and love.”

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SERVED BY

Rev. Valentine Ugwuanya Pastor

Denise Perry Secretary

For more information on our parish please go to:

Goodshepherdnj.com

Or email us at

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FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK ON THE SOLEMNITY OF ASCENSION THURSDAY.

Today is one of those days when across the globe, we celebrate the Feast of Ascension, in the Catholic Church, people may not be listening to the same readings today. In some countries, and dioceses in US, they celebrated Ascension Thursday this past Thursday, and are reading the readings and Mass of the 7th Sunday of Easter. But here in our Archdiocese and other dioceses in our country, Ascension Thursday is celebrated this Sunday. Today the Church proclaims, rejoices in, celebrates the mystery of the Ascension. Jesus gives us the hope of eternal life with him in heaven, by ascending, in his risen humanity, to the right hand of God.

But the mystery of the Ascension is not just about our hope for the future. Already it touches us, transforms us, lifts us up, even while here on earth. Of course, we are intensely aware of how much precisely we are not ascended, not yet in heaven. Daily reminders of that include the experience of physical pain, of worry, trouble, conflict, and war, of concupiscence and all earthly attachments, of anger, envy, sloth and the rest of them. But St. Paul tells us that in our baptism we have already not only died with Christ, and been buried with him, but also, we have already been raised up with him, already we have been enthroned with him in glory (Eph 2:6) and with the gifts of Christ and with faith, we have received, one day we shall ascend where "He... has ascended and took prisoners captive..." (Eph. 4:5-8)

In the reading from the Acts of the Apostles we hear two men say to the apostles, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky?" Jesus had left and the apostles didn't know what to do. They have heard Jesus' words but they just cannot see themselves doing anything without the leadership of Jesus. I think the two men are there to shake up the apostles, to get them to move, to stop looking up and start looking around to see what they can do to spread the good news of God's reign.

The apostles were challenged to look inside of themselves and remember what Jesus had taught them. Do we sometimes "stand looking up at the sky" wondering what we can do? Let us open our eyes and see who among us is in need and respond in whatever way we can: a smile, a word of encouragement, a helping hand, a prayer. In his letter to the Ephesians Paul reminds us that we have been called by God, and we have been given gifts, not for ourselves but gifts to be used so we can build up the Body of Christ.

Looking up to heaven is not to be an escapism from life. The disciples are told in the Acts of the Apostles, "Why are you Galileans standing here looking into the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will come back in the same way as you have seen him go to heaven" (Acts 1:11). They can't possibly be "witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to earth's remotest end" (Acts 1:8), if they kept standing there just gazing at the sky. The disciples' belief in the Risen Lord, the power of the Spirit, and their hope in the second coming of Jesus have to be expressed in their commitment to transforming the world. Yes, they need to have their feet firm on the earth.

On this great day, let us all remind ourselves that we have important mission in our lives and in our various respective ministries and vocations, be it as those called to the priesthood and holy orders, or those called to the religious and consecrated life, or those called to a life of holy singlehood and other forms of ministry associated with that. Each one of us should do our best to proclaim and bear witness to the Gospel and also in the propagation of the Faith in deed and in truth. As people redeemed, let us show the world the Redeemer our Lord Jesus Christ and His Good News. As we celebrate Mothers' Day today, let's thank our mothers and those who took the role of motherhood to raise and nurture children who are not theirs and cared for them. We are grateful and appreciated all you have done for us your children. Happy Mother's Day.

Good Shepherd Parish Schedule for Mass & Worship (schedules are subject to change)

Saturday (anticipated) 5:30pm
Holy Day TBD.

Sundays —9:00am, 11:00am
Reconciliation: Saturdays 4:45-5:15pm

National Holidays —9:00am
Adoration Mo-Fri 7:30am-5:00pm

Mass Intentions For the week of May 11, 2024 - May 18, 2024

Saturday 5:30pm For the Protection of Babies in the Womb and Their Families

May 11

Sunday 9:00am For Peace in Our World

May 12 11:00am For the Protection of Babies in the Womb and Their Families

Monday 7:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Giancarlo H. Perilla

May 13

Tuesday 7:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Maya V. Azzi

May 14

Wednesday 7:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Christopher and Victoria Perry

May 15

Thursday 7:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Benjamin Perry III

May 16

Friday 7:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Luisa Ventura

May 17

Saturday 8:30am For God's Guidance and Protection of Venus Matthews

May 18 5:30pm For the Repose of the Soul of James and Mildred Manzella

Kindly keep our parishioner's family, with health and other challenges, in your prayers

Let us always remember in our prayers the sick members of our Parish

Paul Kocum	Sandi Mosley	Debbie Watson	Rihanna Scott	John Valfour
Elizabeth Cassata	Pope Francis	Frank Rocchi	Camile Laidlaw	
Frederick Hamilton	Curtis Richards	Carlos Quinones	Venus Matthews	
Jean Michelin	Corizon Abuzied	Bob and Barbara Nezlick	Patrick Roylance	

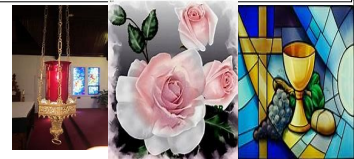
* Please advise if any names should be added or delete from the list

Hospital Privacy | Please remember that current privacy laws regarding patients in hospitals do not allow hospitals/ pastoral care offices to contact parishes. If you or a loved one are in the hospital and want a priest to visit, please call the I office at (973)375-8568

Ministries: If you're interested in ministries of service either as a Lector or Eucharistic Minister, please call the rectory at 975-375-8568 or fill out the Information below and place in the collection basket.

Name : _____
 Telephone #: _____
 Lector _____ Eucharistic Minister _____

Please contact Fr. Valentine or call the rectory if you are interested in Intentions, of a Sanctuary Lamp, Alter bread and wine or Alter Flowers







ANNUAL APPEAL 2024

MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY









Collection Report May 5, 2024

Weekly Target	\$6,500.00
Collection (Offering+ Fuel & Energy)	\$ 2,485.00
Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 4,015.00
<u>Fiscal Year to Date</u>	
Budget:	\$346,811.00
Actual:	\$83,796.00
Surplus (Deficit)	\$263,015.00
Rolling 4 Week Averages	
Average Collection:	\$2,78.00
Average Surplus (Deficit)	\$3,713.00

Minister Assignments May 18 2024– May 19 2024

Saturday Sunday	Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers	Presiding
05/18 5:30pm	Paulette Anderson- Spence	Nellie Bate Barbara Banks Mina Yago	Fr. Val
05/19 10:00am	Longinus Onyegu	Jerome Hule Luer Drews Janet Drews	Fr. Val
No	11AM Mass		

GSP EVENT CALENDER

Sunday May 12
ASCENSION SUNDAY
Monday May 13
Our Lady of Fatima 7:30PM Parish Council Meeting in the Rectory
Tuesday May 14
Saint Matthias, Apostle
Wednesday May 15
Saint Isidore
Thursday May 16
Friday May 17
Saturday May 18
Saint John I, Pope 10:00 AM Hall set-up for Pentecost Sunday Event

Good Shepherd Parish Information

RECTORY HOURS: Monday Thru Wednesday 10:00AM-2:00PM; Thursday / Friday 9:00AM-12:00PM

Parish Registration Forms can be found at the back of the church or call the rectory at (973) 375-8568

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION Saturday 4:45-5:15 pm

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM In order to have your child baptized at Good Shepherd, the parents must be registered and active members of our parish. Godparents or sponsors must meet qualifications as to have received both sacraments of Communion and Confirmation, attend Mass regularly and been a registered parishioner at a Catholic Church For more information please call the Rectory at (973) 375-8568

THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY Couples who are planning a wedding should call the parish office to meet the priest, to choose the date of the wedding and before any other arrangements are made call (973)375-8568

PASTORAL OF THE SICK Notify a priest of all who are hospitalized, home-bound, or Emergencies call (973)375-8568

ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS, RCIA. Adults interested in becoming members of the Catholic Church and Catholics in need of Sacraments, Confirmation or Eucharist; inquire at the Rectory. To register please call the rectory at(973-375-8568

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Sunday of October-April from 10:00-11:00 am in the Church building. For more information please call the Rectory at (973-375-8568

Pope Benedict XVI's Homily on the Ascension, May 28, 2006

Brothers and Sisters, today in Blonie Park in Kraków we hear once again this question from the Acts of the Apostles. This time it is directed to all of us: "Why do you stand looking up to heaven?" The answer to this question involves the fundamental truth about the life and destiny of every man and woman. The question has to do with our attitude to two basic realities which shape every human life: earth and heaven. First, the earth: "Why do you stand?" – Why are you here on earth? Our answer is that we are here on earth because our Maker has put us here as the crowning work of his creation. Almighty God, in his ineffable plan of love, created the universe, bringing it forth from nothing. Then, at the completion of this work, he bestowed life on men and women, creating them in his own image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:26-27). He gave them the dignity of being children of God and the gift of immortality. We know that man went astray, misused the gift of freedom and said "No" to God, thus condemning himself to a life marked by evil, sin, suffering and death. But we also know that God was not resigned to this situation, but entered directly into humanity's history, which then became a history of salvation. "We stand" on the earth, we are rooted in the earth and we grow from it. Here we do good in the many areas of everyday life, in the material and spiritual realms, in our relationships with other people, in our efforts to build up the human community and in culture. Here too we experience the weariness of those who make their way towards a goal by long and winding paths, amid hesitations, tensions, uncertainties, in the conviction that the journey will one day come to an end. That is when the question arises: Is this all there is? Is this earth on which "we stand" our final destiny? And so, we need to turn to the second part of the biblical question: "Why do you stand looking up to heaven?" We have read that, just as the Apostles were asking the Risen Lord about the restoration of Israel's earthly kingdom, "He was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight." And "they looked up to heaven as he went" (cf. Acts 1:9-10). They looked up to heaven because they looked to Jesus Christ, the Crucified and Risen One, raised up on high. We do not know whether at that precise moment they realized that a magnificent, infinite horizon was opening up before their eyes: the ultimate goal of our earthly pilgrimage. Perhaps they only realized this at Pentecost, in the light of the Holy Spirit. But for us, at a distance of two thousand years, the meaning of that event is quite clear. Here on earth, we are called to look up to heaven, to turn our minds and hearts to the inexpressible mystery of God. We are called to look towards this divine reality, to which we have been directed from our creation. For there we find life's ultimate meaning. Dear brothers and sisters, I am deeply moved to be able to celebrate this Eucharist today in Blonie Park in Kraków, where Pope John Paul II often celebrated Mass during his unforgettable Apostolic Visits to his native land. Through his liturgical celebrations he met the People of God in almost every corner of the world, but surely his celebration of Holy Mass in Blonie Park in Kraków was always something special. Here he returned in mind and heart to his roots, to the sources of his faith and his service to the Church. From here he could see Kraków and all Poland. In his first Apostolic Visit to Poland, on 10 June 1979, at the end of his homily in this Park, he said with nostalgia: "Allow me, before leaving you, to look out once again on Kraków, this Kraków whose every stone and brick is dear to me. And to look out once again from here on Poland." During the last Mass he celebrated here, on 18 August 2002, he said in his homily: "I am grateful for the invitation to visit my Kraków and for the hospitality you have given me" (no. 2). I wish to take up these words, to make them my own and repeat them today: I thank you with all my heart "for the invitation to visit my Kraków and for the hospitality you have given me." Kraków, the city of Karol Wojtyła and of John Paul II, is also my Kraków! Kraków has a special place in the hearts of countless Christians throughout the world who know that John Paul II came to the Vatican Hill from this city, from Wawel Hill, "from a far country", which thus became a country dear to all.

At the beginning of the second year of my Pontificate, I have felt a deep need to visit Poland and Kraków as a pilgrim in the footsteps of my predecessor. I wanted to breathe the air of his homeland. I wanted to see the land where he was born, where he grew up and undertook his tireless service to Christ and the universal Church. I wanted especially to meet the living men and women of his country, to experience your faith, which gave him life and strength, and to know that you continue firm in that faith. Here I wish to ask God to preserve that legacy of faith, hope and charity which John Paul II gave to the world, and to you in particular. I cordially greet all those gathered in Blonie Park, for as far as my eyes can see and even farther. I wish I could meet each of you personally. I embrace all those who are taking part in our Eucharist by radio and television. I greet all of Poland! I greet the children and young people, individuals and families, the sick and those suffering in body or spirit, who are deprived of the joy of life. I greet all those whose daily labors are helping this country to grow in prosperity. I greet the Polish people living abroad, everywhere in the world. I thank Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Kraków, for his warm words of welcome. I greet Cardinal Franciszek Macharski and all the Cardinals, Bishops, priests and consecrated men and women, as well as the other guests who have come from many lands, particularly the neighboring countries. My greetings go to the President of the Republic and to the Prime Minister, and to the representatives of the national, territorial and local Authorities. Dear brothers and sisters, I have taken as the motto of my pilgrimage to Poland in the footsteps of John Paul II the words: "Stand firm in your faith!" This appeal is directed to us all as members of the community of Christ's disciples, to each and every one of us. Faith is a deeply personal and human act, an act which has two aspects.

To believe means first to accept as true what our mind cannot fully comprehend. We have to accept what God reveals to us about himself, about ourselves, about everything around us, including the things that are invisible, inexpressible and beyond our imagination. This act of accepting revealed truth broadens the horizon of our knowledge and draws us to the mystery in which our lives are immersed. Letting our reason be limited in this way is not something easy to do. Here we see the second aspect of faith: it is trust in a person, no ordinary person, but Jesus Christ himself. What we believe is important, but even more important is the One in whom we believe. Saint Paul speaks of this in the passage from the Letter to the Ephesians which we have heard today. God has given us a spirit of wisdom and "enlightened the eyes of our hearts, that we may know what is the hope to which he has called us, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his great power in Christ" (cf. Eph EP 1,17-20). Believing means surrendering ourselves to God and entrusting our destiny to him. Believing means entering into a personal relationship with our Creator and Redeemer in the power of the Holy Spirit, and making this relationship the basis of our whole life. Today we heard the words of Jesus: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (AC 1,8). Centuries ago these words reached Poland. They challenged, and continue to challenge all those who say they belong to Christ, who consider his to be the greatest cause. We need to be witnesses of Jesus, who lives in the Church and in human hearts. He has given us a mission. On the day he ascended to heaven, he said to his Apostles: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation ... And they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it" (MC 16,15,20).

Dear brothers and sisters! When Karol Wojtyła was elected to the See of Peter in order to serve the universal Church, your land became a place of special witness to faith in Jesus Christ. You were called to give this witness before the whole world. This vocation of yours is always needed, and it is perhaps even more urgent than ever, now that the Servant of God has passed from this life. Do not deprive the world of this witness! Before I return to Rome to continue my ministry, I appeal to all of you in the words spoken here by Pope John Paul II in 1979: "You must be strong, dear brothers and sisters. You must be strong with the strength that comes from faith. You must be strong with the strength of faith. You must be faithful. Today, more than in any other age, you need this strength. You must be strong with the strength of hope, the hope that brings perfect joy in life and which prevents us from ever grieving the Holy Spirit! You must be strong with love, the love which is stronger than death ... You must be strong with the strength of faith, hope and charity, a charity that is conscious, mature and responsible, and which can help us at this moment of our history to carry on the great dialogue with man and the world, a dialogue rooted in dialogue with God himself, with the Father, through the Son in the Holy Spirit, the dialogue of salvation" (Homily, 10 June 1979, no. 4).

I too, Benedict XVI, the Successor of Pope John Paul II, am asking you to look up from earth to heaven, to lift your eyes to the One to whom succeeding generations have looked for two thousand years, and in whom they have discovered life's ultimate meaning. Strengthened by faith in God, devote yourselves fervently to consolidating his Kingdom on earth, a Kingdom of goodness, justice, solidarity and mercy. I ask you to bear courageous witness to the Gospel before today's world, bringing hope to the poor, the suffering, the lost and abandoned, the desperate and those yearning for freedom, truth and peace. By doing good to your neighbor and showing your concern for the common good, you bear witness that God is love.

I ask you, finally, to share with the other peoples of Europe and the world the treasure of your faith, not least as a way of honoring the memory of your countryman, who, as the Successor of Saint Peter, did this with extraordinary power and effectiveness. And remember me in your prayers and sacrifices, even as you remembered my great Predecessor, so that I can carry out the mission Christ has given me. I ask you to stand firm in your faith! Stand firm in your hope! Stand firm in your love! Amen!