

AUGUST 1, 2021

18TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

The Church of

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Email: info@saintalbertthegreat.org

Office staffed T, W and Th, as we are able.

We continue to offer three masses each week to enable people to attend while maintaining appropriate social distancing. The Sunday 9:30 am mass continues to be live streamed on our Facebook page. We are also offering a Saturday 5:00 pm mass and a Sunday 12:00 pm (noon) mass.

Although state capacity restrictions have been lifted, we must still maintain six feet of physical distancing between groups, which means that our attendance is still limited. The 9:30 mass is the most popular. When your schedule allows, please consider attending one of the other two services.

Attendance at mass is still NOT required. Please make choices that keep you and the community safe.

Fr. Joe and the staff hold you all in our prayers, and ask that you pray for us and for all the essential workers who are striving to keep things running.

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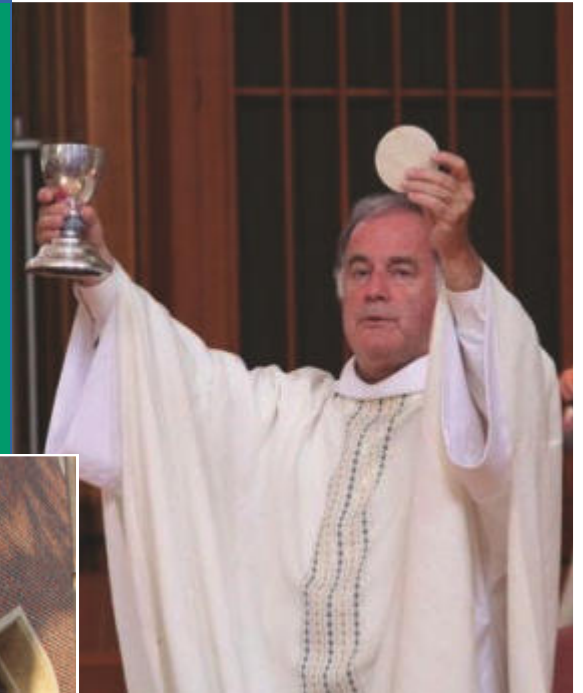
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"I am the
Bread of Life.
Whoever comes to me
will never go hungry."

Jesus



Say YES to
love and peace.
Amen! Alleluia!



This week at St. Albert's

(masses and intentions are in **BOLD** type)

Saturday, July 31

5:00 pm mass Marge Nelson

Sunday, August 1

9:30 am mass Welcome to

Fr. Jude McPeak, O. P. as Associate Pastor

10:30 am Coffee & cookies outside in front of the church between masses

12:00 pm mass For Our Parish Family

2:00 pm Summer Jazz concert with Maud Hixon and Rick Carlson. \$20 at the door.

Monday, August 2

8:15 am Lori Clark †

Tuesday, August 3

8:15 am Arnold Nelson †

Wednesday, August 4

Thursday, August 5

8:15 am mass — Marie Nelson †

12:00 to 3:00 pm Potluck lunch, crafting and conversation in the Social Hall

Friday, August 6

8:15 am mass Dolores Nelson

Saturday, August 7

5:00 pm mass Sharlene Stoddard †

Sunday, August 8

9:30 am mass For Our Parish Family

10:30 am Ice Cream Social outside in front of the church between masses... music, free hot dogs & ice cream, kids' activities. All are welcome!

12:00 pm mass For Our Parish Family

THE NEW NORMAL

- * **We will continue to offer three Masses** each weekend for as long as the Sunday noon mass remains popular/practical. We also continue to livestream the 9:30 AM liturgy.
- * **The general dispensation from the Sunday and Holy Day obligation has been lifted.** The dispensation remains available to people at high risk of developing serious illness and for people who care for such individuals. Anyone with symptoms or recent exposure to COVID-19 must still remain at home for the safety of all.
- * **Morning masses in the chapel have resumed at 8:15 am, with the rosary at 8:00 am.** As in the pre-pandemic past, weekday masses will be Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. The East door off the back parking lot will be open for weekday masses, along with the elevator entrance.
- * **Use of the front center church doors continues to be encouraged for weekend masses, along with the elevator entrance.**
- * **There are no seating restrictions.** Please respect the desires of those who wish to maintain some physical separation. Feel free to use the hand sanitizer, which will be available for the foreseeable future.
- * **Masks are no longer required** although of course they are still encouraged for the unvaccinated. We do have disposable masks available.
- * **Full singing resumes on the Feast of St. Dominic, August 7/8.** The hymnals are back in the pews.
- * **Give the Sign of Peace** to those near you in ways others appear comfortable with.

"I am your servant, Lord."

Would you like deeper involvement in the mass? To understand why Catholics do what we do during the celebration? In September, we'll offer training for the important role of altar server. It's open for 4th graders through adults. (Adults who could be available to serve daytime funerals are especially welcome, and there are a couple of additional tasks for funeral servers.) Give some thought to whether you or your children feel called to help in the liturgy, and watch for the announcement of training dates. If you have questions, contact Janelle or Fr. Joe.

Are you on the "Friday Blast" list?

During the Covid-19 quarantine, the parish began a weekly email on Fridays with attachments of the weekly Bulletin and the weekend's scripture readings. We use it as well for updates on news that may have occurred since the Bulletin's Wednesday printing, as well as poems and other inspirational messages.

We began by using all the email addresses we have on file. If you don't receive "The Blast" and would like to, please email Erin at e.sim@saintalbertthegreat.org. (As with the Bulletin itself, the Blast will remain one of Erin's tasks as she steps back to being part-time at St. Albert's.)

In our prayers

We remember those who need healing, including Michael Callaghan, Marge McInerney, John Hall, Ben Wilkie, Bill Bowen, Dick Martin, Mary Iffert, Jessica Arvold Bainbridge, Joan Ellison, Curt Huovie, Marianne Green, and Harry Duskin.

Please add a prayer for those who have died, including Sharlene Stoddard (sister of Glenda Huston) and Diane Marrin.

Due to HIPAA privacy standards, hospitals and care centers cannot notify us of your need for our prayers or visits unless you direct them to call.

If you or someone you know would like to be included in our prayers, or have the Sacrament of the Sick, or communion brought to you, please let the office know at 612-724-3643.

Call Fr. Joe at 612-245-3345 or Jim Curran at 612-483-1546 if you would like the Eucharist brought safely to you at home.

"Why is hay like manna from heaven?"

In the fast-paced world of gourmet cooking, Julia Child remains an icon of practicality and stability for those learning to cook. One of television's first "cooking evangelists", Child, who died in 2004, provided practical recipes that saved many dull household cooks from culinary oblivion. Julia could outwit the cleverest of slick culinary up-starts with her sensible steps for "putting the hay down where the goats could get at it." In moments of culinary confusion, Julia offered practical advice: "When in doubt, add more butter and white wine. If necessary, you could even add the wine to the food."

In both the gospel reading (John 6:24-35) and the first reading from the Book of Exodus (16:2-4, 12-15), we are introduced to "new food" concepts. For the Israelites traveling through the desert under the leadership of Moses, God heard their hunger complaints and promised: *"I am going to rain bread (manna) from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for the day."* Just coming off the miracle of feeding over 5,000 people, Jesus alluded to Israelites' plight in the desert: *"Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness. Very truly I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from Heaven. I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."*

In both presentations of "new recipes" for staving off hunger, the Israelites were uncertain of the "flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground." When the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another: "What is it?" In a similar assessment of Jesus' statement, *"I am the bread of life,"* the people looked at him as if he were "flaky." After Jesus had provided a surprise picnic of bread and fish in a deserted place for the multitudes, the crowd wanted assurance of more fast-food miracles. Fortunately, for Jesus, they apparently had not heard about the miracle of turning water into wine! Jesus challenged their sincerity and said: *"Do not work for food that perishes, but for food that endures for eternal life."*

Today's gospel launches us into a lengthy "Bread of Life" discourse explaining the feeding of the multitude. Acknowledging the misguided intentions of the crowd who, in effect, wanted Jesus to be their "chief baker and buffet manager," Jesus would launch a new theological food line. The people pursued Jesus for a free lunch; instead, Jesus would feed them with the fullness of his teaching: *"Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."* Echoing a prediction regarding the expectation that the Messiah would provide manna for the "new exodus", the writer of The Book of Deuteronomy (8:3) provided the insight: *"Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes out of the mouth of God."*

In the next few weeks, Jesus will work hard at explaining the interplay between understanding the "stomach and the heart" perceptions of the bread of life. In today's gospel, Jesus introduces the "Bread of Life" as a new teaching that will nourish the revelation of Jesus as the Messiah sent by God. Later, Jesus would present the "bread of life" as a sacramental and Eucharistic invitation to receiving the gift of Jesus himself. In the gospel of John, the author uses the Greek word "zoe" which implies a fullness of life for the whole person. Moving beyond a literal understanding of bread as physical nourishment, Jesus' introduction of the "Last Supper" and the sharing of the bread (Communion) would provide a hands-on understanding of how Jesus would feed his followers. Just as in the early Christian Churches, Jesus continues to feed the "hungry" as we gather around the table for liturgy. On this Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, we continue to testify that the continuity of the Eucharistic celebrations are the tangible proof of Jesus' theological promise.

The literal reception of gift of the "Bread of Life" (the Eucharist) becomes

the theological basis for nourishing our faith in the real presence of Jesus among us. The reenactment of the "Last Supper" moves beyond the symbolic promise of Jesus' presence and introduces us into his real promise: *"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."* The transforming presence of Jesus becomes the invitation to a new way of life, one that reflects conversion. St. Paul, in his Letter to the Ephesians (4:17-24), challenged the early Christian Community and insisted that they "could no longer live as the Gentiles live. This is not the way you have been nourished in Christ." Paul was emphatic in his demands: *"For surely you have heard about him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus. You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourself with the 'new Christ,' created to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."*

Hungering for the Truth in a society where fake news so easily passes for the truth, we are to undertake a lifelong journey guided by the faith, hope and love of our God for us. Not unlike the Israelites being led by Moses in the desert, we too have our doubts, but continue to struggle in search of the Promised Land. Despite bad hair days, petty complaints and inept political and religious leadership, we search for intellectual satisfaction and the promise of a land filled with milk and honey. Wanting to believe that God is really providing us with adequate direction and compensation for following in the footsteps of Jesus, our grumblings and anger at the imperfect conditions surrounding us in our world account for doubts and the need for forgiveness. Revelation is an on-going process and the pursuit of proof for the theological statements of Jesus demands faith. However, the promise of "food for the journey," even in times of crisis are available for those who believe. The real gift of faith will sustain us as we jettison our baggage of doubt and continue to patiently trudge along through the desert in search of the Promised Land.

Just as our Eucharistic liturgies reveal a desire for a relationship with God and one another, we must move beyond mere human symbolism of the Eucharist to understanding the reality of God's presence among us. Re-discovering our dependence on the need for the Bread of Life, the Eucharist becomes the catalyst for helping others to find the manna from heaven that will sustain them on their journey in the wilderness of their lives. Recent controversies about banning individuals from the reception of the eucharist continue to create a genuine sense of sadness as we judge our sisters and brothers. While it is important to understand and respect the Eucharist, profiling who is worthy or unworthy of receiving the Eucharist becomes a dangerous guessing game unbecoming to a welcoming community of faith. We must search for communities of faith where people can find food for the journey and hope for a better world. Nourishing our minds and hearts with the true understanding of the Eucharist, I would say that we have achieved the best of both worlds. Theologically, we understand God's love for us and our love for one another. Sharing the Bread of Life is not optional.

Oh yes, "Why is hay like manna from heaven? Because they both come from aloft!" Some may not find this funny, but it's true. God will provide the manna from above, just like stored hay must be taken from the loft; however, we must find ways to distribute what is nourishing for the hungry. Sharing the good news that "the hay is on the table", we must find ways to call the "sheep and the goats" (saints and sinners) and make room for them at the table. When in doubt, why not "just add more butter and white wine?"

Peace, Fr. Joe Gillespie, O.P.



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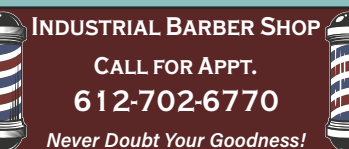
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