



St. Anthony St. Stephen Our Lady of Fatima
Father Nilo Macapinlac
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Weekday and Weekend Masses are cancelled during the COVID 19 Pandemic.

May 25, 2020

My dear friends, brothers and sisters in the Lord,
Shalom!

Today is the solemnity of the glorious ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ into heaven. Indeed, it was the glorious moment when Jesus, 40 days after His resurrection, was lifted up — quite literally— into heaven, as the apostles watched in stunned amazement. It is recounted in both our first reading, from Acts, as well as the Gospel passage, from Matthew. It must have been an extraordinary thing to witness.

But the first reading tells us that the apostles were not permitted to simply bask in the moment for very long. “While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going, suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them. They said, ‘Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky?’” In other words, “Don’t just stand there, do something!”

This verse is a call to each one of us Christian stewards this very day. We have been given every grace and blessing through the Mass and all of the sacraments, through the Word of God, the rich teachings of our faith, and even our talents and our material possessions — so many gifts and blessings that we should live in a kind of stunned amazement ourselves.

And like those first apostles, we are not meant to just stand here, but to do something with these gifts — in love and gratitude to the One Who gave them to us. We are called, just as much as the first apostles “to be [His] witnesses... to the ends of the earth,” not with our own power, but through the power of the Holy Spirit in us.

Our second reading, from the Letter to the Ephesians, reminds us of the might and power of God whose witnesses we are. In fact, St. Paul describes “the surpassing greatness of His power.” He reminds us that the Father raised Christ from the dead and has placed Him “far above every principality, authority, power, and dominion... not only in this age but also in the one to come.” This is the mighty God we serve, the One Who has blessed us with every good thing, and the One Who now gives us the privilege of serving as His witnesses to the ends of the earth.

This God knows us, His children, so well. He knows that we are prone to fear and weakness, just as the first apostles were. In the Gospel passage we read that they went to the mountain as the Lord instructed, and they saw Him there just as He promised. “When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted.” The Lord was not angered by their doubt. Instead, He encouraged them with a reminder that “all power in heaven and on earth” had been given to Him. With that, He sent them on their way. “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,” He told them and He tells us today. Because He is so loving, He gives us one more powerful, comforting reminder — “I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

On this feast of the Ascension, let us take a moment to “look up at the heavens” and ponder all the graces and blessings our loving God has given us. Then, let’s do something! Let’s put all those gifts to work as we serve as grateful witnesses to this amazing God. Let us remain steadfast in our faith, fixed our gaze upon heaven above all the Ascended Lord Jesus Christ who is now seated at the right hand of the Eternal Father. Let us constantly lift up our hearts to Him in prayer especially at every Mass. This is our spiritual exercise that our lifting up of our hearts in prayer, one day we will be also with Christ who pierced the heights of heaven.

May our solid faith in the glorious Lord Jesus Christ transcend all the limitations of human life as we faced the challenges of Corona virus. May the Lord who is seated at the right hand of the Eternal Father is the surest sign of a full guarantee that our prayers are heard and our needs are met. Keep safe, keep well, keep healthy and keep holy...we are united in prayers and above all in one Lord and God, Jesus Christ whose Holy Spirit abides with us in His Church and who accomplished to reveal our Eternal Father. Glory to God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit now and forever, without end. Amen

God bless you richly and protect you always. Do not be afraid, God loves you so dearly!

Lovingly yours in Christ Jesus, the Lord of endless glory,

Fr. Nilo Macapinlac, pastor

Divine Mercy Chaplet – Zoom Gathering

We are united in Prayer at the hour of Mercy – We invite you to join us via Zoom for our Parish Community to come together and pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet together. Finance Report. If you are interested in participating with our Parish community, please contact your community leader for the Zoom invite

Confession

Father is available on Saturdays at 11:00am for Confession in the library. We ask that everyone maintain Social Distancing while here.

Good News

Happy Birthday to Agatha McRae of Didsbury, who will be celebrating her 96th Birthday on May 27, 2020. We wish you a very blessed and happy day!



Do you have a Loved One in Hospital?

When you can't visit the hospital, here's a link by which you can send well wishes to patients. Your kind words of encouragement will be delivered by the volunteers of Alberta Health Services and Covenant Health facilities. albertahealthservices.ca/info/wellwishes

Food Box

We just want to remind everyone that the Food Box is here. We are very grateful to all who help us to keep it replenished. We want to encourage anyone that finds themselves in need at this time to contact Donna in the Parish. If you know of anyone who is struggling to put food on the table, please make sure they know they have options available to them.

Bishops Update: Date for Resumption of Public Masses not yet set – Quid Novum

The Catholic Bishops of Alberta remain committed to the gradual reinstatement of public celebrations of the Mass and welcome the recent release of the *Guidance for Places of Public Worship* document as part of the provincial government's relaunch strategy.

These guidelines are being carefully considered by the task force that the Bishops have established under the direction of Archbishop Richard Smith of Edmonton and Bishop William McGrattan of Calgary.

The task force is drafting for the Bishops a set of directives for the gradual reintroduction of Masses in public. The Bishops will present these to Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health. The proposed directives will take into consideration the information that will be received from the Telephone Town Hall with the Premier and the Chief Medical Officer scheduled for Thursday, May 21.

No date will be set for the resumption of public liturgies in our Catholic churches and institutions until the Bishops are satisfied that their own directives can be fully and properly implemented.

Any announcement of the date for the gradual reintroduction will be made at least five days before the first scheduled Mass. Parishes by then will have received diocesan guidelines which help ensure the safety of everyone.

"It is critical that we understand the risks and take steps in minimizing the spread of COVID-19 through prudent planning," said Bishop McGrattan.

"The health and safety of our parishioners, priests, and church staff are of utmost importance. Each and every life is a precious gift from God, and we are called to do everything in our power to protect them. This has been a tremendous sacrifice on the part of the faithful who strongly desire to celebrate the Eucharist in their parish communities. We are grateful for their cooperation, their patient endurance, and especially for their prayers."

Youth Retreat – Live Stream – May 23 – 31st, 2020

The live streamed Youth Retreat starts on May 23rd, 2020. If you haven't already registered, go to www.mikeisthird.com/veni. The retreat is being brought to you by the Vocations office of the Archdiocese of Edmonton. It is open to any young person (teenager or young adult) who would like to enrich their spiritual life, to begin or enhance their habits of prayer and become the saints God created them to be. Join Mike Landry, and his crew of youth ministry veterans and Pastors within the diocese for this retreat in preparation of Pentecost. This retreat will include streamed Masses, talks, Holy Hours, discussions, and a special episode of 'Left Footers' – all designed to prepare us to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit.

St. Stephen's Youth Ministry invites you to join them for the First Ever Virtual Youth Night on Zoom. The evening will include a creative and innovative game of virtual Lock Room hosted by Reanne Schaber. All Youth grades 5-9 are invited. Contact Reanne Schaber at reanneschaber1@gmail.com for the link to the Zoom Room. May 29, 2020 – 7-8:30 ish. We hope to see you there!!!



Virtual Pentecost Mission

May 25-27 – Fire in the Upper ‘Zoom’ Room

Join Fr. Francis Ching, Fr. Ben St. Croix and Fr. Allan MacDonald for a 3-night Virtual Pentecost Mission! May 25-27 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm (MDT). Sign up today at www.companionscross.org. This will be a presentation using Zoom.

Put on by the Companions of the Cross. Further video information can be found at:

<https://www.companionscross.org/homilies/fr-allan-macdonald-cc/virtual-pentecost-mission-may-25-27>

Victory Gardens

We have been blessed with the opportunity to start the church garden this year! We are going to start slowly with some potatoes, beans, beets, lettuce and a few flowers.

Don't forget to drop off packages of seeds or plant pots in the boxes between the church doors! Thank you for the donations so far of plant pots and the generous contribution for seeds.

If you have any questions about how to start a garden at your home or any other gardening concerns, please contact Kataryna Borysiak at horse_crazy12251@hotmail.com. She was one of the vegetable vendors at the Parish Showcase last fall, and has agreed to be our parish gardening “expert”.

If you would like to grow tomatoes and other plants that need to be started ahead of time, you can buy the plants from Tammy Odersky from Tammy's Green Thumb Greenhouse just outside of Olds. It is best to phone her at (403) 556-6740 to set up a time to come, so that safety protocols can be in place.

If you are interested in helping at all or are interested in receiving any fresh produce this summer, please contact Theresa at 403-559-6843 or Naamah at 403-507-2377.

Parish Pastoral Council News

It has been decided that the St. Stephen's Annual General Meeting will be postponed for now. We will notify our Parishioners when a new date has been determined. If you have any questions, concerns, thoughts or ideas for the PPC to consider, please feel free to forward them to a current PPC member or office staff.

It is that time of year again for us to elect our Parish Council Members. We will be meeting in June to discuss streamlining and strategies during this Covid crisis. It doesn't look like the virus implications will be over soon, so there is a need to plan accordingly, both short-term and long-term. We invite all to nominate or offer themselves to be members of the PPC at this crucial time. Please submit your/their names to Fr. Nilo for consideration. The following positions are open:

- **Liturgy**
- **Spiritual Development**- adult faith formation, planning the mission
- **Building and Maintenance**- we have a dedicated crew of individuals who respond immediately to the needs of the church, but a representative is needed for PPC meetings.
- **Couples for Christ**



PPC News cont'd.

We are in need of a new optimum router for the computers and photocopier. It is necessary for the live streaming and zoom/WebEx meetings as well that are taking place in the parish. The present one is old, and easily gets overloaded. Please consider donating towards this needed item. It would be much appreciated!

We are also looking for a volunteer to assist the Parish Committees with Communications & Technology – someone who can oversee/advise on the digital needs for livestreaming, and Zoom/WebEx and other platforms that are needed at this time.

Parish Giving

We are providing some additional links for sites where contributions towards the Church can be made. Your financial contributions at this time are needed more than ever. Thank you to all who have taken time to drop off or mail your donations, every little bit helps to keep us going during this time.

CAEDM- www.caedm.ca/donate - You can select St. Stephen's in the drop down box

CANADA GIVES - <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/890356249RR0001-the-catholic-parish-of-st-stephen/>

E-TRANSFERS ARE AVAILABLE NOW: A Donation can be sent via interact transfer to St. Stephen's Catholic Parish – use the email address – ststephen102@gmail.com. Please include your name and or envelope number in the message section, so donations can be recorded correctly. For anyone who has been looking for an alternate method, here is something for you.

Automatic Contribution: Paperwork is also available for anyone wishing to sign up to have their monthly contribution automatically applied through debit or credit. Please contact Mia in the office for assistance.

Resources

Quid Novum: www.caedm.ca/quidnovum

EWTN: www.ewtn.com

Find Dynamic Catholic on You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/DynamicCatholic>

Follow Father Mike on Ascension Presents:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=ascension+presents

Living with Christ – free download - <https://www.livingwithchrist.ca/index.php/intentions>

Be Safe

Be Well

Be Holy

