

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER PARISH



5th Sunday of Easter
10 May 2020

St. Francis Xavier, Acushnet – Diocese of Fall River

Mass Schedule

(May 9th - May 17th)

Sat.	May 9	5th Sunday of Easter (Vigil) (Wh) 4:00 pm <i>Pro Populo</i>
Sun.	May 10	5th Sunday of Easter (Wh) 8:00am For All Mothers 10:30am Month's Mind
Mon.	May 11	Easter Weekday (Wh) 9:00am Adelard Joe Farland
Tues.	May 12	Ss. Nereus & Achilleus. Martyrs (Rd) 9:00am Duggan family
Wed.	May 13	Our Lady of Fatima (Wh) 9:00am George Fagundes
Thurs.	May 14	St. Matthias, Apostle (Rd) 9:00am Robert Latshaw
Fri.	May 15	St. Isidore the Farmer (Wh) 9:00am Mr. & Mrs. Antonio Dias
Sat.	May 16	Easter Weekday (Wh) 9:00am Lucy Green
Sat.	May 16	5th Sunday of Easter (Vigil) (Wh) 4:00 pm <i>Pro Populo</i>
Sun.	May 17	5th Sunday of Easter (Wh) 8:00am Helen, Jean & Donny Guenette 10:30am Dorothy Mello, Joan Semeio, & Cynthia Rebello

Financial Report

Mail In/Drop Off Income:

Sunday, 3 May\$2,648.00

Prayers Please

... for all the sick of our parish: those homebound, in the hospital, and nursing facilities; and for all the souls in purgatory. Please especially pray for all COVID-19 patients, all medical staff, and all those awaiting medical treatments and elective surgeries who are suffering.

Sanctuary Lamp

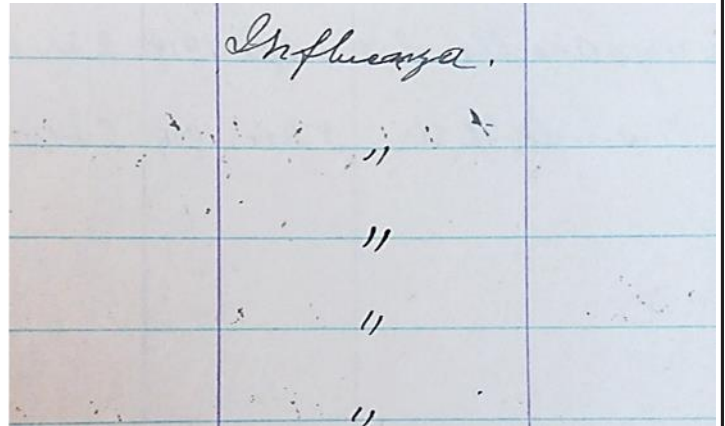
*During this time of our absence away from Eucharistic Adoration please pray at home for the following person/s for whose intention the Sanctuary Candle at the main altar still burns this week: **George Fahey***

CONFESSION

Monday: 5:30 to 6:30 pm
Saturday: 9:30 to 10:00am
Saturday: 3:00 to 3:45pm

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

WHAT IMPACT DID THE LAST EPIDEMIC HAVE ON OUR PARISH?



I recently came across the death register from the early days of our parish, and thought to look at what records there might be from the Spanish Flu Epidemic of 1918. The notations, brief as they are, offer a sobering witness.

The epidemic arrived in Acushnet in early October. The first death in the parish was on 6 Oct. 1918, and the last on 24 Oct. A second wave of the illness arrived in December: the first to die, on 13 Dec. 1918, was Philomène Guillotte, a relative of our Parish Director of Pastoral Services, Steve Guillotte. This second wave lasted through early January 1919, with the last death recorded on 9 January. Along with these are listed two parishioners who died in the last days of World War I, one of whom caught the flu while being held as a prisoner of war in Germany and died less than a month before the end of the war.

To get a sense of the impact of the last epidemic, let's compare numbers. In all of 1917, only seven deaths from our parish are recorded – two of them from a cholera outbreak in August; in all of 1919, six deaths are recorded. In October 1918 alone, eight deaths are recorded. The ages of those who died from the flu give pause as well: 44, 5, 51, 11, 9, 41, and 28; the soldier was 22. From the second wave, the ages of those who died are 26, 3, and 26. I can't imagine what it was like for my predecessor, Rev. André Larivière, SS.CC., who had only arrived a year earlier, to have to bury so many of his parishioners, especially the children.

I thought I would share this not only because of the insight it gives into the history of our parish and community, but also because of the reminder it gives us of the toll that an epidemic can take: the words in the death register are a mute yet powerful testimony to this. While none of us enjoy the restrictions under which we now live, it's good to remember that the alternative can be far worse.

PARISH INFORMATION

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Mon-Fri: 9:30am – 4:00pm

Please make an appointment to meet with

HELPFUL CONTACTS

Religious Education: 508-998-7445

School: 508-995-4313

School Fax: 508-995-0456

ACCESSIBILITY

- Open for Prayer Every Day
- Wheelchair Lift
- Cry-room

St. Francis Xavier Parish **125 Main Street** **Acushnet, MA 02743**

tel: (508)-995-7600 fax: (508) -995-1794

email: info@sfxparish.com

Fr. Riley J. Williams, Pastor

[rjw@sfxparish.com]

Deacon David Pepin

[dbp@sfxparish.com]

Mrs. Janine Hammarquist, Rel. Ed. Coordinator

[jlh@sfxparish.com]

[ministry@sfxacushnet.com]

Mr. Steven Guillotte, Director of Pastoral Services

[sng@sfxparish.com]

Mrs. Michelle Russo, Parish School Principal

[mrusso@sfxacushnet.com]

Mrs. Anabela Shaughnessy, Asst. Principal

[ashaughnessy@sfxacushnet.com]

HOLY MASS

Sunday 8:00am & 10:30am

Saturday Vigil 4:00pm

Monday-Saturday 9:00am

First Friday 9:00am & 6:00pm

Latin/Extraordinary Form: As Announced

CONFESSIONS

Monday 5:30-6:30pm

Saturday 9:30-10:00am

Saturday 3:00-3:45pm

First Fridays 6:45-7:15pm

Any Time by Appointment

ADORATION

Mon - Friday 6:30am-9:00pm

Saturday 6:30am-2:45pm

VESPERS

Monday: Vespers with Benediction

Tuesday: Vespers

Wednesday: Vespers with Benediction

(Vespers begins at 6:30 pm)

ON THE COVER

So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, "It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table. Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task..." (Acts 6:2-3)

In reading our scriptural quotation above from Sunday Mass one might think that the Apostles had forgotten Christ's command at the Last Supper to serve humbly (Jn 13:14); for when approached by their flock to settle a dispute over the distribution of charity to widows, the Twelve seem to shun the task and instead create other "servants" (in Greek *diakonia*) to manage such affairs. Now it is a justifiable question to ask why the Apostles did this especially since only two chapters earlier in Acts, the Apostles were receiving money directly from believers for distribution to the people (Acts 4:35).

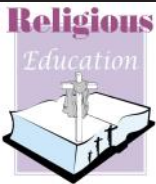
A few points are necessary to understand their actions. First, today's reading begins with the phrase "*the number of disciples continues to grow*". This means that there was an ever greater need of laborers for the harvest (Lk 10:2) and the Apostles were needed afield. Next, the Apostles' pulling back from daily decisions was in keeping with Jewish tradition: this is exactly what Moses did in taking the advice of Jethro to assign minor judges to the flock (Ex 18:21-23); Jethro called the delegation of such duties a "command of God". Lastly, the creation of deacons was perfectly in accord with the Holy Spirit which had already begun forming such men toward ordination (Acts 6:3).

So today we celebrate our deacons, our priest's assistants by appointment and sacrament. We also come to see that their assignment was not just to "serve at table", which in truth is only a pithy expression for "serving the people directly". St. Luke wrote the Acts of Apostles, and immediately after announcing the institution of *diakonia* he showed how Stephen the Deacon not only proclaimed the word of God but died for it (Acts 7). Later on in Acts 8, Philip the Deacon is found preaching and working wonders in Samaria and baptizing in Gaza. Thus, in the kingdom of heaven even the "waiters at table" are called to proclaim Christ!

For this **5th Sunday of Easter**, we place on our bulletin cover a work by an obscure Spanish painter, **Onofre Falco**, entitled *St. Stephen Ordained as Deacon* (1555). Falco was prominent in the Valencian School and was friend to the high master of the style, Juan de Juanes. Sixteenth century Valencian art was influenced by Italy in color and light, but by the Counter-Reformation in spirit and piety. Comparatively it is not a magnificent style, but its devotional character is strong. Many of its artists never painted a worldly subject.

Here we see St. Peter and St. Stephen in full liturgical dress. Interestingly, in the 16th century the deacon was not a stopping point for ordination, but always the next step to becoming a priest. Thus, the gaze of Peter outward may have moved many men to discern the priesthood. Flanking the kneeling Stephen are either Apostles deliberating over this innovative call to the diaconate or possibly candidates for this new vocation. In the upper right Falco has set a table for Stephen to serve at, placing him directly with the people and the poor. Stephen will serve them well, and Christ too, as he kneels on the color of martyrdom that would be his destiny.

5th Sunday of Easter - May 10, 2020



Happy Mother's Day

to all mothers during this month dedicated to Our Blessed Mother, please consider increasing your Marian prayer by praying a *daily* decade of the Holy Rosary as well as a full rosary once a week. Visit our parish website or the parish

Facebook page to view the Mass daily. Please make time for prayer (Daily readings via the Magnificat or USCCB website, Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, even your own prayers during this most difficult time).

Please PRAY for All of our First Communion Students awaiting a new date to receive Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament for the first time this year. The students have been completing assignments via the computer and doing a great job! They will still have a few practices to finish up before receiving the sacrament. Parents please keep checking your email for upcoming lessons.

Level 1-9 classes Please check your emails! Religious Education Class work, helpful prayer tips & websites as well as fun activities for feast days have been sent out via parents email. Some of this work is being required to be sent back completed, especially if your child is in a sacramental year.

Thank you to all of the families that have taken the time to check emails and complete the work on the Holy Mass each week as well as class work!

God Bless, Mrs. Hammarquist

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER
PRESCHOOL - GRADE 8



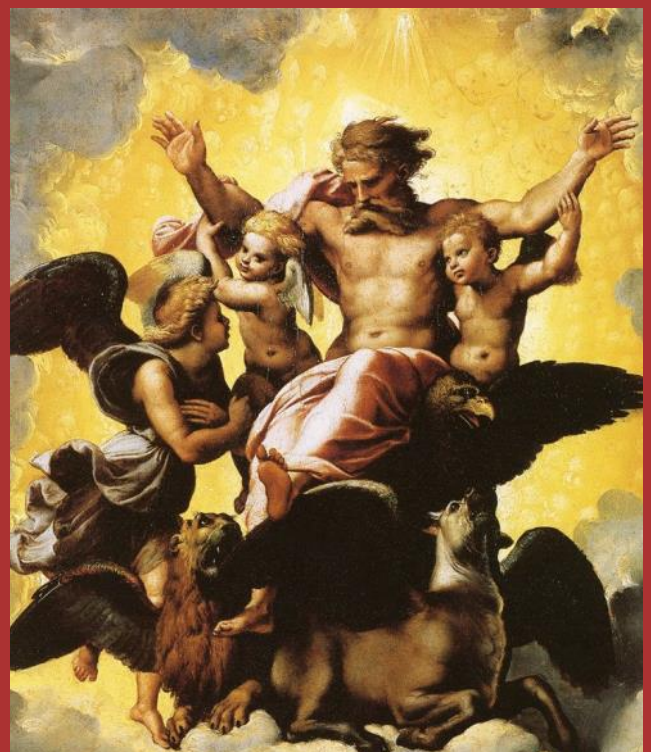
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
ACUSHNET, MASSACHUSETTS

On behalf of our staff and students, I extend wishes for a *very Happy Mother's Day* to all of our parish mothers! In this month dedicated to Our Blessed Mother, our school family will be praying a daily decade of the Holy Rosary. In these times that we are faced with, however, the decade-of-the-day will be prayed virtually, via *Zoom*, at 3pm daily. I hope to see many of our students participate and carry on this school tradition even while they are not *in* school! We are also hoping that in some creative way, a few of our second graders may be able to "do the honors" of crowning Our Blessed Mother during a virtual school Mass. It is so very difficult to be separated from our school community in this way; however we continue to persevere, doing our best to celebrate our rich traditions, even if in non-traditional ways. Thank you for your continued prayers for our school, our faculty and our students!

God Bless, Michelle Russo/Principal

UPCOMING SECOND & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

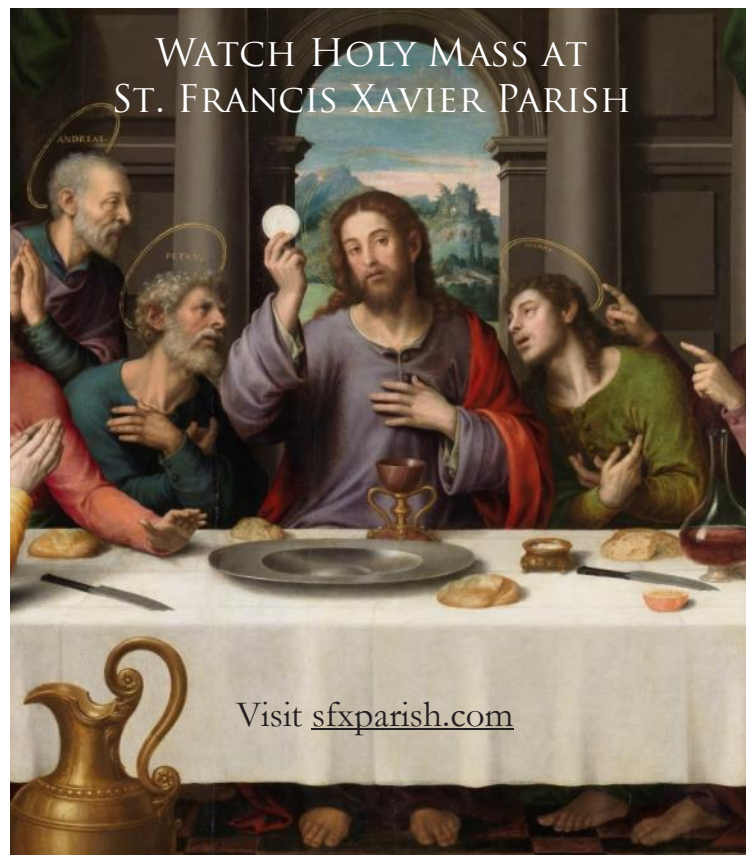
May 10th - Parish Building Fund



Vision of Ezekiel
Raphael (1518)

Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him." (Jn 14:6-7)

WATCH HOLY MASS AT ST. FRANCIS XAVIER PARISH



Visit sfxparish.com

SFX
WOMEN
OF GRACE

From the desk of Johnnette Benkovic, founder of Women of Grace:

"Each of us, as women, are called to be mother. Some have been called to be a biological mother or an adoptive mother, but each of us, by virtue of our femininity has been called to be "spiritual mother." Perhaps that is why I spent a good portion of my Mother's Day thinking about our Blessed Mother. She is the pre-eminent and most exalted icon of spiritual maternity. In her we see the realization of the feminine ideal, the perfect woman, who identifies every woman's call and mission."

Wishing you a blessed Mother's Day!

A VISION OF FATIMA

By Salvador Dali (1962)
(see commentary on last page)



THANK YOU MOTHERS



Blessed Mother's Day!



GIVING HOPE: We continue to support those who are most vulnerable, have great loss and are in most need. Helping those in need is uplifting and as simple as reaching out to a neighbor or acquaintance who has fallen behind a bit, calling a friend you have lost contact with and find out what they need and dropping it by. We appreciate your support during this trial. I can assure you that your kindness has brought many smiles and hope in the darkness.

Mike Bachstein/SVDP

MONTH'S MIND MASS

We remember the following individuals that were deceased or memorialized in the past month at our Sunday, May 10th Holy Mass

Rene Dansereau
Sister Louise Place O.P.
Joyce Barrett

CHRIST OUR LIGHT

BY ST. MAXIMUS OF TURIN (BISHOP)

Christ is risen! He has burst open the gates of hell and let the dead go free; he has renewed the earth through the members of his Church now born again in baptism, and has made it blossom afresh with men brought back to life. His Holy Spirit has unlocked the doors of heaven, which stand wide open to receive those who rise up from the earth. Because of Christ's resurrection the thief ascends to paradise, the bodies of the blessed enter the holy city, and the dead are restored to the company of the living. There is an upward movement in the whole of creation, each element raising itself to something higher. We see hell restoring its victims to the upper regions, earth sending its buried dead to heaven, and heaven presenting the new arrivals to the Lord. In one and the same movement, our Savior's passion raises men from the depths...

Christ is risen. His rising brings life to the dead, forgiveness to sinners, and glory to the saints. And so David the prophet summons all creation to join in celebrating the Easter festival: *Rejoice and be glad, he cries, on this day which the Lord has made.*

The light of Christ is an endless day that knows no night. Christ is this day, says the Apostle; such is the meaning of his words: *Night is almost over; day is at hand.* He tells us that night is almost over, not that it is about to fall. By this we are meant to understand that the coming of Christ's light puts Satan's darkness to flight, leaving no place for any shadow of sin. His everlasting radiance dispels the dark clouds of the past and checks the hidden growth of vice. The Son is that day to whom the day, which is the Father, communicates the mystery of his divinity. He is the day who says through the mouth of Solomon: *I have caused an un-failing light to rise in heaven.* And as in heaven no night can follow day, so no sin can overshadow the justice of Christ. The celestial day is perpetually bright and shining with brilliant light; clouds can never darken its skies. In the same way, the light of Christ is eternally glowing with luminous radiance and can never be extinguished by the darkness of sin. This is why John the Evangelist says: *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never been able to overpower it.*

And so, my brothers, each of us ought surely to rejoice on this holy day. Let no one, conscious of his sinfulness, withdraw from our common celebration, nor let anyone be kept away from our public prayer by the burden of his guilt. Sinner he may indeed be, but he must not despair of pardon on this day which is so highly privileged; for if a thief could receive the grace of paradise, how could a Christian be refused forgiveness?

Our Lady of Fatima

(and Salvador Dali)

We tend to shy away from the use of modern art in this parish publication. First of all, modern art is very subjective and often expresses an anarchy not conducive to true spirituality. Also, because modern art is so worldly it does not present many good Christian images. At best the modern work might be used in a Christian allegory or lesson.

Today we are going to risk it! In honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as Our Lady of Fatima (Feast Day, May 13th), we have placed on page 4 of this bulletin a Surrealist work by **Salvador Dali** entitled *A Vision of Hell* (sometimes called *A Vision of Fatima*).

This is not a heterodox or blasphemous work although many may wonder what this strange sight has to do with Fatima. Surrealism is not usually a forum for positive religion as it focuses primarily on primitive thought or the "pre-rational". Surrealism has more to do with Freudian free-association and the direct impression of dreams. Sadly, it originally had activist ties to communism. But because it is a purely subjective and expressionistic vehicle for art, it can in the right hands articulate through symbolism a very spiritual event such as a vision or a conversion.

The background of this work is that Dali was approached in 1959 by Our Lady's Blue Army (*The World Apostolate of Fatima*) to paint an image of the Fatima children's vision of hell. For over a year Dali studied the description of hell portrayed by Lucia (by then Carmelite Sister Lucia). Dali made it a point to visit Fatima, Portugal and through his priest guide Jose Galamba de Oliveira was able to secure a meeting with Sister Lucia through the cloister grill. He would later comment that his meeting was like "*breath [ing] the air of a future saint*". Before he left Fatima, Dali asked for and received the sacrament of confession from his priest guide and returned to Holy Mass. It is said that when once Sister Lucia saw the finished painting, she commented: "*Hell is spiritual and not physical, and it is impossible for anyone to make an image of hell. The painting comes as close as humanly possible to representing hell.*"

Dali put Surrealism ("super-realism") to work to present *his own* conversion. In the center of the work is pierced-flesh representing man's soul (e.g. Dali's soul). Dali uses the image of escargot forks to stab at the sinner's spirit which he said like a snail will otherwise "curl up in the shell and become irretrievable". As hell below cracks open so as to skewer and catch the soul, another fork goes straight through the glowing Immaculate Heart of Mary to reclaim the soul for herself. Mary is portrayed in her own heavenly space in an elongated mysticism reminiscent of El Greco. Because Fatima was a warning to all to avoid hell, this painting portrays the struggle of the soul, which must allow itself to be pierced by the divine if it is to avoid being perforated and dragged into a desolate and smoking interior which is the absence and estrangement from God; for in hell the landscape of the divine reality fissures and exposes the everlasting void of spiritual darkness.