

What is the Feast of the Ascension Really About Anyway?

By Marcellino D'Ambrosio, PH.D.

The celebration of the Ascension used to leave me a bit flat. It was clear what Good Friday did for me. And Easter Sunday's benefits were indisputable. But as for the Ascension, I wondered, what's in it for me?

Christianity is about a kind of love we call agape or charity. It is love that looks away from itself to another and gives itself away for another. The Divine Word did not become man or endure the cross because something was in it for Him.

Charity shares in the beloved's joys and sorrows (Jn 14:28). The first thing to remember about the Ascension is that it is about sharing in Jesus' joy. It is about celebrating his return to the heavenly glory to which he refused to cling (Phil 2:6-11). It is about rejoicing that his crown of thorns has been replaced with the kingly crown, that the mocking crowd at Calvary has been replaced with myriads of adoring angels. The Ascension is about Jesus's triumph and glorification. If we get our attention off ourselves and allow the Holy Spirit's love of the Son to animate our souls, we'll experience greater joy than when we see our child hit a home run or graduate from college.

But the Ascension is not just about charity. It is also a feast of hope. Yes, there is something in it for us. He goes to prepare a place for us (Jn. 14:2). We will also one day wear crowns made of gold instead of thorns.

For us to endure until that blessed moment, we need divine power. That's another reason we ought to rejoice in his Ascension. He takes his place at God's right hand so that he can pour out the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, upon his disciples (Eph. 4:10).

As he ascends, he tells the disciples to wait for this power. But notice that he does not tell them to wait passively for the rapture. He does not instruct them to pour over Bible prophecies, debating about how and when he will return. In fact in Acts 1:11, after the Lord ascends out of their sight, the angels ask why the disciples just stand there, staring into space.

The waiting is not to be a squandering of precious time. It is waiting for a purpose, nine days of prayer (the first novena!) leading to empowerment. Why empowerment? Because they have challenging work to do. "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations." (Matt. 28: 16-20).

We used to think that evangelization was something that happened in mission countries far away, carried out by priests and religious. But the Second Vatican Council told us that our own neighborhoods are mission territory, and that every single Catholic is called to be an evangelist. Pope John Paul II proclaimed this as the "New Evangelization" because the place is new – right next door – and the missionaries are new since they include all us all.

I'm really not sure that St. Francis of Assisi ever said "Preach the Gospel always; when necessary, use words." But if he did, note this—Francis often thought it very necessary to use words. His words could be heard in marketplaces, on street-corners, in Churches, wherever there were people. Of course, preaching without an authentic witness of life is certainly counterproductive. But forget about the idea that just the witness of our lives is enough. It is not. You may not be called to preach on street corners, but Vatican II and subsequent popes, echoing 1 Pet 3:15, say that we all must be ready to articulate what Jesus has done for us, what he means to us, and why he is the answer to the world's problems.

Feel inadequate to the task? You're in good company. Benedict XVI's first public statement was an admission of his inadequacy. Do as he did—pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to move in and through you, and take the time to keep learning more about your faith so that you can share it with ever greater confidence.

www.catholicexchange.com



PARISH DIRECTORY

Parish Council

Donna Trasolini
trasolini@telus.net

Finance Council

Lauri Ann Fenlon
lauri.ann.fenlon@gmail.com

Parish Education Committee

Maili Wong
pec@olphbc.ca

Parish Fundraising Committee

Sandie Weitz
sweitz20@gmail.com

COORDINATORS

Altar Guild

Bridget Bird 604-228-9180

Altar Servers

Kate Carr 604-730-5640

Catholic Women's League

Meg Knowling
MKnowling@Outlook.com

Children's Liturgy

Kathy Mok
communications.olph@rcav.org

Craft Group

Elizabeth Hii etkmhii@gmail.com

Development & Peace

Deirdre Webster 604-736-0714

Eucharistic Ministry

Pamela Brammall 604-228-9206

Food Bank

Robyn Simul
robysimul@shaw.ca

Hospitality Ministry

Gerry Macken 604-222-1369

Knights of Columbus

Peter Dodge 604-649-1111

Liturgy of the Hours

Bridget Clark 604-228-8773

Madonna Group

Monica Cheung 604-739-8837

Ministry of the Word

Roger Poirier 604-224-0426

Music Ministry

Catherine Walsh
catherine.organist@gmail.com

Pastoral Care

Mary Thompson 604-263-6008

PREP

Elizabeth Towers 604-440-8809

Project Advance

Bertilla Watanabe 604-224-4344

RCIA

Bertilla Watanabe
bwatanabe@rcav.org

Social Justice/St. Vincent de Paul

Mark Thompson 778-891-6275

Volunteers Coordinator

Lara Garcia Carton
olphchurchvolunteers@gmail.com

Weddings

Fr. Babu Mathew 604-224-4344



OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP PARISH

June 2, 2019

Ascension of Our Lord

MASSES & SERVICES

Saturday: 5pm
(Anticipated Mass)
Sunday: 9am, 11am & 5pm
Monday – Wednesday 8am
Thursday Mass/Novena:
8am & 7pm
Friday, Saturday, Holidays: 9am
(Fridays in July & August: 8am)
Children's Mass: 9am 1st
Sunday of the month Oct-June
Children's Liturgy: 11am
All Sundays except the 1st
Sunday from Sept- June
Reconciliation
Saturday: 4-4:45pm
Adoration
Saturday 9:30-10am
Library Hours
Sunday: 10-10:45am, 4:30-5pm

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 9am-4pm

STAFF

Pastor

Babu Mathew, CSsR

Associate Pastor

Joseph Horo, CSsR

In Residence

William Comerford, CSsR

Office Manager

Virginia Fong

Pastoral Coordinator

Bertilla Watanabe

Bookkeeper

Corinna Siy

Youth Ministry Coordinator

Theresa Barao

OLPH School Principal

Lora Clarke

Jr. Kindergarten Director

Maria Cortese

CONTACT

Email: parish.olph@rcav.org
Website: www.olphchurch.ca
Parish Office: 604-224-4344
OLPH School: 604-228-8811
Jr. Kindergarten:
jrkindergarten@olpbc.ca
OLPH Church, 2465 Crown
Street, Vancouver BC V6R3V9

Centennial Plans Gain Interest in Wider Community

Dear Parishioners,

In tandem with this year's Project Advance we have launched our own appeal for the Centennial Development Fund. As I mentioned last week, this year's Project Advance rebate will go toward the fund for the Centennial Development Plan which will mark the 100th anniversary of the good work of the Redemptorists in Vancouver. I am happy to report that there has already been a lot of interest and positive feedback from the wider faith community. The article in the latest issue of the BC Catholic gives a full account of where we are going with it and the critical role the Knights of Columbus have in this endeavor.

None of this, dear friends, would be possible without your generous and prayerful support. The idea is to create affordable housing that meets the aspirations of seniors, couples and teachers of this community.

Your participation in Project Advance this year will pave the way forward for this worthy cause for our parish. You will find regular updates on how our Project Advance Appeal is progressing in the bulletin in the coming months. May our Blessed Mother of Perpetual Help steer our course and make all good things possible in the name of Jesus our Redeemer.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R

BC Catholic: Vancouver Parish, Knights Team Up on Affordable Housing

By Agnieska Ruck

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Vancouver and the Knights of Columbus' Columbus Homes are teaming up to create new housing in a neighbourhood seriously lacking affordable options. Many years will pass until they see the fruits of their labour, but Redemptorist Father Babu Mathew and Mike Garisto are already full of excitement.

"Four years ago, when I became the pastor, we had a meeting about the needs of the community, and one of the things we heard again and again was the need for housing for seniors," said Father Mathew.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help church sits in a beautiful West Side community, with lush trees, big, old homes, and views of the North Shore mountains. The values of those homes, and the taxes, have skyrocketed in recent years, leaving some local seniors who have lived there for decades struggling to pay the bills or opting to move as far as Langley or Maple Ridge to downsize to more affordable housing.

"I have seen with my own eyes people who have been moving away, who have been so much a part of this community. It is painful when we see someone who is 70, 75, or 80 making another community their home. That's difficult," said Father Mathew.

Relocating isn't only a challenge for seniors; Father Mathew said a parish suffers when its older members move away. "Seniors are truly a gift. Their experiences and the wisdom they bring to the community is amazing," he said. *Continued inside...*

PROJECT ADVANCE Live gratefully, give generously.

You can make a donation to Project Advance by filling out the pledge form you received in the mail or using the detachable envelope on the leaflet. You can also go to www.rcav.org. Just indicate that your parish is OLPH.



God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. - Psalm 47

Weekly Collection: Sunday Mass Offering May 25 & 26: \$23,080.98. Pope's Pastoral Works: \$1,086. Share Lent: \$25. Work of Vocations: \$25. Offering for the Needy: \$50. Thank you for your faith-filled generosity.

PREP Pre-Registration: The Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) is for elementary school aged children who are not attending Catholic school. Pre-registration for the 2018/2019 school year is open till June 30. Please contact Elizabeth Towers at 604-440-8809 or email prep.olph@rcav.org for information.

PEC Election Results: Two nominations for positions on the PEC were received by the Nominating Committee at closing time on May 15. The two nominees, Patrick Burkart and Sarah Guizzo will take office by acclamation as there were no other nominees. We look forward to working with all the members of the committee in the coming school year.

Choir Members for 9am & 11am Masses: The OLPH choir is seeking new members: we especially need singers who can commit to the Sunday 9am and 11am Masses. Rehearsals are on Monday evening 7-8pm. Please contact Music Director Catherine Walsh for more information: catherine.organist@gmail.com.

Youth Ministry Helpers: If you are interested in helping out at the Sunday 5pm Youth Mass or joining OLPH Youth Ministry, please contact Theresa Barao: olphyouthmin@gmail.com.

Birthright Vancouver - Walk/Run Fundraiser: Birthright Vancouver, a downtown crisis pregnancy service, is hosting its annual Walk/Run Fundraiser on Saturday, June 15, at 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. This fun family event will include a stroll around the lovely Queen Elizabeth Park, family activities and refreshments. All proceeds from the event will go towards Birthright's efforts to support pregnant women and their children by offering them the love, care, and support they need. For participation details, please contact birthrightvancouver@gmail.com or follow "Birthright Vancouver" on Facebook.

John Main Seminar and Pre-Seminar Silent Retreat in Squamish: You are warmly invited to the 2019 John Main Seminar and Pre-Seminar Silent Retreat for an opportunity to deepen your contemplative prayer life. Benedictine monk and Catholic priest Fr. Laurence Freeman, Director of the World Community for Christian Meditation and Order of Canada recipient, will lead the Silent Retreat (Aug. 5-8) on Sources of Wisdom: Spirit, Failure, Scripture and Silence. The theme of the John Main Seminar (Aug. 8-11) is A Contemplative Christianity for Our Time. For more information, visit jms2019.org, wccm-canada.ca or call JoAnn at 604-922-8856. Retreat Location: Quest University in Squamish.

Rosary Rally: Come to pray the Rosary in honour of Our Lady, to make reparation to her for sins committed against her Immaculate Heart, and to beg graces from her Divine Son, through her; with public witness to the faith. Takes place on Saturday, June 15, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Vancouver Art Gallery South Plaza. Rallies will also be held at the South Plaza on July 13 and Aug. 10. Oct. 19 will be at the North Plaza. September is still to be arranged.

St. Anthony's Novena: The annual St. Anthony of Padua Novena will take place from June 5 – 12 at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Vancouver with all Masses starting at 7:30 pm, preceded by confessions at 6:30 pm. On Thursday, June 13, St. Anthony's Feast Day celebration starts with a procession at 6:30 p.m., Mass at 7:30 p.m., and a fiesta celebration afterwards. There will be no morning Masses from June 5 – 13 and no 5:00 p.m. Mass on Saturday, June 8.

Mass Wedding for Civilly Married Couples - Information Session: Have your Church wedding this summer! If you got married civilly and would now like to have your marriage recognized by the Church there will be a great opportunity to do so again this year on Saturday, Sept. 21, at 1:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Good Counsel, Surrey. Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB will be celebrating a wedding Mass for a large number of civilly married couples. Attend an information session with your spouse on Monday, June 3, at 6 p.m. at Our Lady of Good Counsel School auditorium, Surrey. For more info., contact the OLG parish office at 604-581-4141 or Deacon Greg Barcelon at 604-771-2975 or email fipinoministry@rcav.org.

Stewardship Reflection

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." (Revelations 22:13)

This is a reminder of how we should live our lives 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – putting God first in all that we do. Not only when I am at Mass and parish activities, but when I am in the world, at work or at school. Living gratefully and generously is a lifestyle; it should influence how I make all my daily decisions.

Stewardship Office, Archdiocese of St. Louis

JUNE

International Festival

Our International festival gatherings leading up to Pentecost Sunday have just begun. We invite parishioners to share the food and aspects of their culture with short music or dance presentations, if you like, after the 11am Mass. If you are participating, please contact Lara. Email: olphchurchvolunteers@gmail.com. Or sign up in the foyer.

Sunday June 2: The Americas
Sunday June 9: Pentecost Sunday BBQ

OLPH Golf Fundraiser



Info and registration forms for this event are available in the church foyer.

OLPH Novena/Triduum & Feast



Bishop Jon Hansen, CSsR of the Diocese of MacKenzie-Fort Smith and Northwest Territories is our guest speaker at this year's Triduum Novena & Talks. This will climax with a special Mass to celebrate our feast day at 5pm on Sunday June 23 to be followed by a reception and potluck dessert from parishioners. All are invited.

Friday June 14 – Wed June 19: Novena after morning Mass
-Thurs Novena & Talk June 20: 7pm
-Fri Novena & Talk June 21: 7pm
-Sat Novena & Talk June 22: 6pm
-Sun June 23: Mass at 5pm
Reception to follow. Please bring a dessert to share!

International Festivals Bring Parishioners Together

The OLPH International festivals are a wonderful opportunity to meet others in our parish family, share a little about your family background and sample some good food.

Over the last two Sundays, we've had a wonderful array of flavours from Asia and Europe. This week it's all about the Americas – North and South. We hope you'll take the time to stop by the hall, chat with our generous hosts, and connect with as many other parishioners as possible!



BC Catholic: Vancouver Parish, Knights Team Up...

...Continued

Columbus Homes, an organization of the Knights of Columbus, operates several independent and assisted living residences in partnerships with parishes (at Guardian Angels and St. Mary's in Vancouver, Immaculate Conception in Delta and St. Mary's in Chilliwack).

But this joint project with Our Lady of Perpetual Help is a major leap into something the organization has never done before. It plans to build new housing – approximately 44 suites at below-market pricing – entirely for independent living. If all goes according to plan, Columbus Homes will purchase a portion of parish land, build a low-rise apartment building, and lease a portion of the building to the parish. It would offer a buy-back option at the end of the lease.



Fr Babu with Mike Garisto. Photos by Agnieska Ruck.

The opportunity allows Columbus Homes to “do what we do best, and that's build housing and provide it for our Catholic community,” said Garisto. “We're just honoured to have the opportunity to work with the Redemptorists and try to help share this vision they have for housing and keeping the community together.”

The building is set to offer larger suites than those in other Columbus Homes projects. It will also include some units for Redemptorist priests, as the current rectory is too large and antiquated for their needs. It will also offer some suites for teachers at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School. Teachers, like seniors, are moving away and commuting long distances to the elementary school, said Father Mathew. A lack of affordable housing in Vancouver's West Side, coupled with the current teacher shortage in B.C., means the school has had to recruit teachers from as far as Ireland.

“We are looking into having a few rental units so when teachers come from overseas, they can have something accessible to them.” There are also hopes for a large meeting space for parish events. “The mandate for Columbus Charities, when we were founded, was historically looking after low-income” earners, said Garisto.

“But there is such a tremendous need for the middle-income earners and middle-income retired people that have moderate assets and still want to stay in the community as they age.”

Seniors moving into the new building would sign up for a 29-year “life lease,” a concept Columbus Homes has borrowed from the Elim Society (which runs a retirement village). Residents will be able to sell their suite back to Columbus Homes anytime, move out, or renew after 29 years.

The unique partnership benefits both Our Lady of Perpetual Help and Columbus Homes, an organization founded by the Knights of Columbus.

Plenty of meetings and approvals from the City of Vancouver will be necessary before a shovel can go into the ground, but Father Mathew hopes the building will be up in time for the parish's 100th anniversary in 2025. St. Alphonsus Liguori, founder of the Redemptorists, “had the vision ... to bring together people in a common place where they can pray together, learn together. I think that's what is going to happen when we have this project completed,” said Father Mathew.

“This community has been so generous to the Redemptorists. It is a time for us, as we prepare to celebrate the centennial of the Redemptorist presence in Vancouver, to give back to the community that has been generous to us. We have been gifted with this beautiful piece of land, and we want to use it for the greater good of the community, especially for parishioners.”

