

TIDINGS

OF HOLY NAME of JESUS NATIONAL CATHOLIC PARISH

A Monthly Newsletter of Information and Events

Vol. 30 – 2017

Month of August

No. 8

The Skeptical Bible Reader - XX

In July we discussed the biblical concept of *apostle* from the perspective of The Twelve. This is a closed group. Luke defines this group of apostles through a Petrine pronouncement: “So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when [Jesus] was taken up from us – one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection.” (Acts 1:21-22) The apostolic job requirement in this sense is as an eyewitness to the life and ministry of Jesus. Accordingly, when the generation of such witnesses passes so do the apostles as The Twelve.

However, *apostle* undergoes a profound transformation in the biblical writings and it seems to be powered by the compelling example of one person: Paul. According to the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, four-fifths of the use of the Greek word for apostle are found in “Paul and his pupil and companion Luke.” (Vol. 1, p. 421).

Paul is a late-comer to the faith. We first encounter him as Saul, a persecutor of the earliest church (Acts 8:1, 3). On the road to Damascus, however, he has a mystical encounter with the heavenly Jesus as told in Acts 9:1-31 where Saul falls off his ass onto his ... well you know. Based on this firsthand experience of the heavenly Jesus rather than the earthly, Paul claimed the designation of apostle. Some in the church challenged his apostleship since Paul had never witnessed the ministry of the earthly Jesus, but their challenges may also have been born of theological disagreement.

Paul led the church away from her Jewish identity, an identity accepted by The Twelve and by Jesus of Nazareth. These traditionalists were made anxious by Paul’s innovations. Some were so disturbed that they challenged Paul’s apostleship and countered his missionary work. This rises to the surface in Paul’s curt letter to the Galatians. Paul begins by insisting that his authority is from Christ directly and in

no way whatsoever dependent upon human commission or authorities. Paul is especially agitated in chapter 2, which is honest and uncensored. For Paul apostleship is testified to by the community formed (1 Cor. 9:1-2; 2 Cor. 3:1-3; 12:11-12). They became his attestation.

Now all sorts of people could be called an apostle of the risen Christ when they came to believe and were sent out with the full authority of the church (Acts 13:2-3). James the brother of the Lord, for example, doubted the historical Jesus yet is called an apostle (cf. John 7:5; Mark 3:21; Galatians 1:19). Even women could be empowered as an apostle of the earliest church (Romans 16:7)!

Whereas The Twelve was a closed group as discussed last month, Paul’s grasp of apostleship was ongoing. Take Epaphras as an example. According to the Epistle to the Colossians, Paul had never traveled to that area (2:1). It seems that Epaphras had heard Paul preaching elsewhere and then Epaphras shared the gospel with his fellow townspeople when he returned home (1:6-7). If in the Epistle to the Philippians Epaphroditus is the same person, he is named by Paul “brother and coworker and fellow soldier,” and, “your messenger, and minister to my need.” (2:25) That word *messenger* is the Greek word *ἀπόστολος*, *apostle*. The next generation of apostles emerges and it is not dependent upon an orderly line of succession but rather on a personal calling by God to evangelize, which the church then recognizes and formally accepts. The church substantiates the apostles not the apostles the church.

Apostles are not church leaders, but church builders (cf. 1 Cor. 12:28). They do this through love. Paul explained his relationship with the community as “gentle among you like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children” and “like a father with his children.” (1 Thess. 2: 7, 11) This is the biblical rendering of the unbroken line of apostolic succession.

<THE END>

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS
MONTH OF AUGUST**

August 4, 2017 – Monthly visitations to the sick and the shut-in of the parish.

August 5th – Confession for the youth of the parish at 10:30am.

August 6th – Early summer Mass recited at 7:45am. Celebration of the holy Mass also at 9:00am.

At both Masses, requiem prayers will be offered for Bp. Francis Rowinski (8/4/1990), the fourth Prime Bishop of our church.

August 7th – Bible study group will meet in the parish hall from 7 – 8:00pm.

August 8th – Monthly meeting of the Parish Committee at 7:00pm.

August 13th – Mass will be celebrated outdoors weather permitting at 9:00am.

Requiem prayers will be offered for Bp. Thaddeus Zielinski (8/11/1990), the third Prime Bishop of our church.

August 15th – **FEAST OF THE DORMITION.**

Mass of the day at 7:00pm with the blessing of flowers and herbs.

August 20th – **CHICKEN BBQ AT THE HAT-FIELD LION'S CLUB PAVILION FROM NOON UNTIL 5:00PM.**

August 22nd – Bible study group will meet in the parish hall from 7 – 8:00pm.

August 27th – **YOUTH SUNDAY.** Prayers will be offered throughout the denomination for the youth of the church. A special collection will be accepted after Mass for the Youth Fund.

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“If Christ should find Himself once again on earth, He would deny those who have hatred, who turn away from a brother only because he folds his hands differently in prayer or prays from a different book.” – Fr. Francis Hodur in Wilkes-Barre, PA, 1902 (*Sermon Outlines*, p. 37-38)

NEW MEMBER

On behalf of the parish, I welcome Nancy Hrynshyn to Holy Name. If you know of anyone looking for a parish, invite them with you to our church.

SPECIAL SUMMER MASSES

During each summer month, we plan one early Mass that is recited and a bit quicker and

cooler. The early summer Mass will take place on August 6th at 7:45am. The regular, sung Mass will be celebrated that same day at 9:00am.

Also during the summer we try to head outdoors once a month to gather for Mass in the shade of our beautiful maple trees. Our outdoor Mass, weather permitting of course, is scheduled for August 13th. Chairs from the hall will be set up, but you are more than welcome to bring your own lawn chairs from home if they are more comfortable. I thank the members of the YMSofR Men's Club for their help with set up and take down for these outdoor Masses.



I would also like to mention that if families are traveling during the summer it is one thing, but if you are at home on Sundays, please make every effort to not take a vacation from church.

BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Our Bible study group meets throughout the summer. The parish hall is relatively cool and dry. We meet for only a couple of hours a month, but while we read and discuss each verse, it is the method that is most important. We read the inspired text with a critical eye. This is not *critical* as derogatory, but as analytical. We include the reality of the author's input, conscious and unconscious, in the text. We compare what we are reading with what we have encountered in other biblical writings. And we try to fathom how the text may relate to us today. If you would like to join us for this type of Bible study AND discussion, I encourage you to spend a little bit of your extra summer leisure time with us.

We will be reading from John 6 in August. This is the chapter about Jesus as the bread of life. This is John's treatment of the Eucharist. Every other Gospel writer records that Jesus institutes the Eucharist at the Last Supper among His closest followers. John has a much more detailed account of the Last Supper. Jesus expounds at length as He sits in the Upper Room with them, but even with this extended

account of that night, not a word is said about the Eucharist. John transfers intentionally the theme of the Eucharist away from the end of Jesus' life and he instead places it in the middle of Jesus' ministry and in the midst of a great crowd of believers and non-believers. And while the other Evangelists have the disciples distribute the bread from the miracle of the loaves, in John Jesus does this Himself. There is no intermediary between Christ and the one receiving the gift of the bread of life. All of this is full of meaning and implication and should make for lively discussion. I would love to invite you to come and join us. And let's add on top of this biblical message the fact that Bp. Hodur chose John's Gospel as the foundation for the canon of the Mass he composed for our church and that we use every Sunday. What would have inspired him to do so? Again, there is a lot to talk about here and I hope you will think about coming down to the church hall and helping us to figure all of this out.

FEAST OF THE DORMITION

This feast day falls on August 15th annually. It is a liturgy designed by the church to further honour and exalt Mary. The tradition associated with this day is that upon the death of Mary she was accepted immediately into heaven. We bless flowers and herbs on this day to reinforce the lesson of Mary's intercession. As one of the saints in heaven, Mary may intercede on our behalf with Jesus. The flowers remind us of her beautiful spiritual example and the herbs with their medicinal qualities draw our attention to her healing intercession.

In 1950 as the Pope declared the formal dogma of the bodily assumption of Mary, our church responded by quickly distancing ourselves from this new dogma. We retained the idea of her spiritual assumption, but not her bodily one. This is to cross a threshold that makes Mary God-like. There is no biblical evidence for such a theology. It is crafted from a desire to exalt Mary, but it is too much.

The bodily resurrection is Jesus' alone until the end-time, and for this there is biblical testi-

mony: "For as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death." (1 Corinthians 15:22-26) Bodily resurrection subsequent to Jesus' resurrection is a sign of the end-time conquest when even human mortality is vanquished. This has not happened.

Paul continues by further distinguishing Jesus from all others by stating that Jesus' resurrection is not only about His returning to life. Jesus' bodily resurrection makes Him a "life-giving" Saviour for others. When the distinctiveness of Jesus' bodily resurrection is blurred by talk of Mary's physical assumption, again, she crosses the threshold from saint to God-like. This our church cannot accept.

We honour Mary for the singularly important role she played in the birth and life of Jesus. We pray through Mary to Jesus. We celebrate all of her spiritual gifts on occasions such as the Dormition. But we cannot go further no matter how laudable the intention.

YOUTH SUNDAY

On the last Sunday of August, the church asks that we say special prayers for the youth of our church and community, and that we accept a special collection to benefit the Youth Fund of the church. Your contributions allow the church to support and subsidize youth activities such as Convos and Retreats, and your generosity is appreciated.

CHICKEN BARBECUE

Everyone must know by now that our barbecue will take place on the 20th at the Hatfield Lion's Club Pavilion. Please support this parish fundraiser as best you are able, through your attendance, donations and help. It is a fun summer, Sunday afternoon and it is good for us to come together as friends.

If someone you know needs a hospital visit, please notify the rectory.

Holy Name of Jesus Church * South Deerfield, MA

Annual Chicken BBQ

featuring Polka music & dancing with
Dennis Polisky & the Maestro's Men

**Kielbasa &
Hot Dogs**
**Cash Bar with
Beer & Wine**
Free Popcorn



Huge raffles!
**Bring your
lawn chairs!**

Sunday, August 20, 2017

Lions Club Pavilion * Hatfield, MA

Chicken BBQ Lunch served 12-1pm * Polka Music 1-5pm

\$15 Adult * before August 13

\$18 at the Door * if available

\$5 Child * age 12 or under

\$10 Music Only * no BBQ lunch

**For Tickets call Fr. Randy Calvo
at 413-665-2129**

holynamedeerfield.org * Like us on Facebook