

This Sunday we celebrate the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Based on the Bible and on the testimony of early Christian writers (“Fathers of the Church”), Pope Pius XII summed up the Church’s constant teaching in these words: “Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.” It is beautiful that the Feast of Assumption falls on Sunday this year. It gives all of us a chance honor our Blessed Mother. As our first reading from Revelation 12 states, she is the “woman clothed with sun and the moon at her feet.”

Father Frank Pavone, director of Priests for Life, has a nice reflection on the significance of this feast: “Mary’s Assumption is a sign that God ultimately saves us – and will raise us – in body and soul. Some who justify abortion say they don’t know if the child has a soul. But what matters is that the child has a body, and when we know that abortion destroys the body, we have all the information we need to know it’s wrong.” Father Pavone adds this prayer: “Mary, I rejoice in your Assumption, and in the hope to which it points, that we will all enjoy eternal freedom from death” (from Pro-Life Reflections for Every Day by Fr. Frank Pavone).

At our World Youth Day meeting on Thursday, we had a nice opportunity to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary. At the end of our meeting we placed the memorial scroll at the foot of the Shrine of Our Lady. The scroll lists eleven hundred names of our departed loved ones. We prayed for their eternal rest, asking the Blessed Mother to welcome them and present them to her Son Jesus. In doing so, we prayed for healing of our family trees – that as we thank God for the good things we have received from our ancestors, we might also experience healing for negative things transmitted through the generations. We will be taking all the names with us on our World Youth Day pilgrimage to Rome, Assisi and Madrid next August.



I thank you for your support for our World Youth Day delegation by your prayers, words of encouragement and your financial donations. You have supported our youth in a variety of ways, e.g., your First Sunday offerings, your contributions in relation to the Shrine of Our Lady, your donations using the special World Youth Day envelopes, and your support for various fund raising activities such as the bake sales after Mass and the Garage Sale, which concludes this Sunday after our Masses. We are continuing with other activities this month: the Soccer Tournament (August 21) and Concert (August 28). Also in relation to our Parish Picnic (August 29), our youth will offer some fun activities for children and adults. We are preparing some wonderful fundraising activities for the fall and winter, but I want to emphasize that August is a crucial month. The deposit (\$600) and first payment (\$345) for each delegate are due on September 1. We have about forty youth and adults who want to participate in this pilgrimage. With your support, no family will face an insurmountable financial burden. I thank you for your generosity and prayers.

I also thank you for your ongoing generosity to our parish. In our Stewardship section you can see how we are doing with our Sunday collections in relation to our budget. We are little bit behind. It is somewhat understandable as it is summertime and many people are away from the parish. As you can see, we had a great collection last weekend, and I thank you for it – a great encouragement to me and to all those who love St. Mary of the Valley Parish.

As I have emphasized with our young people, what matters most is not the money, but the bonds of community that we build with each other. Financial generosity follows from our common vision and from our care for each other. And ultimately we give our time, abilities and economic resources out of gratitude to God for his generosity to us – shown most powerfully in his Son Jesus Christ. God gives all and we are stewards of his gifts. May God sustain and bless you in your Stewardship of his gifts. And may the Mother of Jesus intercede for us today and every day.

Reminder: This Saturday we have a meeting for altar servers – both those already trained and those who wish to become servers. Any young person who has made their First Communion and who has their parents' permission may become an altar server. The meeting will begin at 10 a.m. in the Church .



Julie placing the memorial scroll at the base of the Shrine to Our Lady