

Religious Education PREP Newsletter

Issue: May 2021 St. Mary Magdalen Church



Dear Parents,

May is traditionally the month we as Catholics devote to the Blessed Mother (she gets October too, for the Rosary.)

It's also the month where we here at SMM traditionally celebrate First Communions! This year our children will be celebrating this sacrament the weekend of May 15th and 16th, and I hope that you will all keep them in your prayers!

I always found it funny that May was devoted to Mary, because none of her "big" feasts are this month! The Feast of the Immaculate Conception, where we celebrate Mary being conceived without sin (as the "perfect" vessel for Jesus) is on December 8th, and the Feast of the Assumption, where Mary is taken bodily into heaven (like Jesus at the Ascension) is August 15th! She does have many other Feast days, for all of her appearances – but those are the two that celebrate major Church dogma. But as my mother says to me – you're over-thinking it, Karen! Mother's Day is in May, so that is why we celebrate Mary!

The Feast we do celebrate this month is actually a "moveable" one – the Feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descends on the Apostles. Since it is celebrated based on when Easter falls, and Easter changes every year because it follows the lunar calendar, it changes too! This year, Pentecost falls on May 23rd. It is one of my favorite feasts, because it is really the birthday of the Church! After receiving the Spirit, the Apostles, who had been hiding in the upper room after Jesus ascended back into heaven, were suddenly empowered to rush out of the room and preach Jesus with so much fervor that the Bible tells us that 3,000 people were baptized that day! (Acts 2:41) Jerusalem was a major city; people from all



over the known world were there; but somehow, each one heard what the Apostles had to say in their own language (Acts 2:6-11.) So to quote my mother again – It's not what you say, it's how you say it! Happy Feast!

-Karen Yasik



ONLINE REGISTRATION

Hard to believe, I know, but PREP has come into the 21st century! You can now sign up for PREP **and** pay online! Just go to the parish website [here](#) and you can sign up to 4 children without having to repeat all the same information! It's a miracle LOL!

A Meditation on the Eucharist

"The Eucharist is alive. If a stranger who knew nothing about the Eucharist were to watch the way we receive, would he know this? When you and I approach the Eucharist, does it look like we believe we are about to take into our bodies the living person, Jesus Christ, true God and true man? How many times, Lord, have I forgotten that the Eucharist is alive! As I wait in line to receive you each day, am I thinking about how much you want to unite yourself with me? Am I seeing your hands filled with the graces you want to give me? Am I filled with awe and gratitude that you love me so much as to actually want to come to me in this incredibly intimate way?

Or am I distracted, busy with other thoughts, preoccupied with myself and my agendas for the day?

How many times, Jesus, have I made you sad, mindlessly receiving you into my body, into my heart, with no love and no recognition of your love? How many times have I treated you as a dead object? The Host that we receive is not a thing! It's not a wafer! It's not bread! It's a person – He's alive!" – Vinny

Flynn

Vinny Flynn is a prominent Catholic author and speaker, and with First Communions coming up I thought this was a great reminder!

Prayer of the Faithful

This is the time of year when I go through our First Communicants' workbooks. As part of the book, they are asked to write a prayer of the faithful, and they all do a great job! Then when I ask them who the faithful are, they get that deer in the headlights look LOL! So I tell them WE are the faithful – WE are the believers, and all of our prayers are gathered up together. Think of it like a room full of people, and only one has a flashlight. Then think if EVERYONE there has a flashlight! Jesus tells us that when two or three are gathered in his name, he is with them – so just think of all of us gathered together in prayer! What a spotlight of prayer to heaven that must be!

So I'm asking you please to prayer this month for our First Communicants. I usually have up a board with their pictures in the main vestibule, with a note to pray for them, but with fewer people at mass because of COVID restrictions I didn't do it this year. So I'm asking all of YOU to pray for them, especially the weekend of May 15-16 when they will be receiving!

First Communion Parents

The day is close at hand! Now is a good time to try and reinforce everything your child has learned this past year about Mass and the Eucharist. So go to Mass!

Remember the schedule has changed – there's a Saturday night at 4:30PM, and on Sunday an 8:30 and a 10:30. The 8:30 gets you out in plenty of time before our last class this weekend, too!

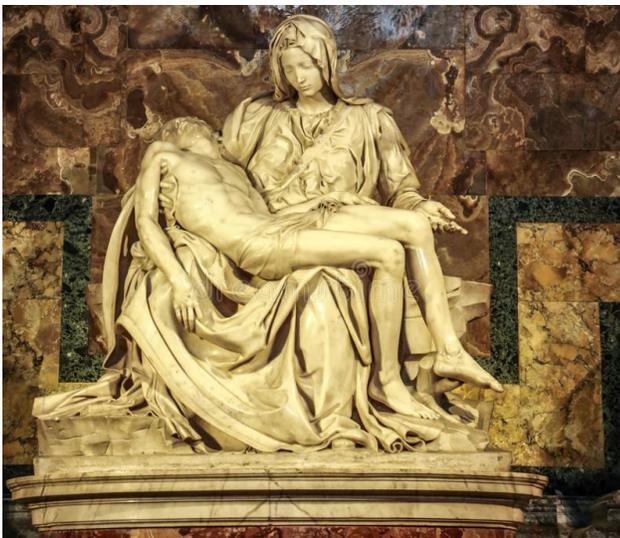
Other things you can do to help them prepare:

- Talk about the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist
- Model reverence when you receive (watch the [video](#) if you need a refresher!)
- Practice receiving at home with your child
- Remind them to say a prayer of thanksgiving afterwards

LAST CLASS

This weekend, April 25th, is our last class for this school year! We didn't even miss any classes because of the virtual ability we have now!

I am hopeful that next year will be different, but I am anticipating keeping the schedule the same. At this point I can't proceed with the family days the way we had them – too many people in a room at one time – so I'm going to be looking at some other ways to do that. One of them is a family catechesis program where I (or another facilitator) would meet with families once a month. Parents would work with their children at home, and then we would get together monthly for an activity and to go through the materials. You would not have weekly classes here, but you would have to do work at home. Let me know if you might be interested – see this [link](#) for details!



Did You Know?

Probably the most famous statue of Mary is the Pieta, the statue of Mary holding her son as they take his body off the cross. It is in St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican in Rome, and was carved by Michelangelo in 1498. There are a lot of beautiful statues of Mary in the Vatican, but this is the only one behind bulletproof glass! Back in 1972, a man named Laszlo Toth jumped the altar railing in front of the statue and, using a geologist's hammer, hit the statue 12 times, causing a lot of damage to this priceless work of art. He broke her left arm and hand, her nose, and even struck one of her eyes. Tourists actually pulled him off the statue before he could do any more, and the restoration took the use of "extra" stone off Mary's back! Afterwards, the Vatican had the statue placed behind the bulletproof glass to protect it from any future attack.

So now you know!