

Meeting of Saints Joachim and Anne at the Golden Gate

Joachim and Anne were the parents of Mary, and thus grandparents of Jesus. We know next to nothing about them, but they are the subjects of old and beautiful legends. Today's painting presents the saints at the Golden Gate of Jerusalem, meeting just after Anne has realized that they are expecting the child whom they will call Mary. Thus these two have long been known as the patron saints of grandparents. The Church remembers them on Wednesday, the 26th. And she prays for all grandparents that day.

The 16th Sunday of the Year
at Lancaster St Bernadette and Bremen St Mary
July 23, 2017

St Bernadette Parish

1343 Wheeling Road NE (740) 654 • 1893
LANCASTER, OH 43130-8701

St Mary Parish

602 Marietta Street (740) 569 • 7929
BREMEN, OH 43107

[stbernadetteparish . net](http://stbernadetteparish.net)

cover picture: **Joachim and Anne at the Golden Gate**

painting in oil on wood, by Ambrosius Benson (1484-1550)

Prado, Madrid

our parishes

Father Thomas Kessler (614) 634-0499
pastor [wthomaskessler @ icloud.com](mailto:wthomaskessler@icloud.com)

at St Bernadette Parish

Jeff Carpenter (740) 681-9918
deacon [carpenter.277 @ osu . edu](mailto:carpenter.277@osu.edu)
Mark Scarpitti (740) 438-3970
deacon [dcn.mark @ frontier . com](mailto:dcn.mark@frontier.com)
Ann Essman (740) 653-9347
pastoral minister [aessman001 @ att . net](mailto:aessman001@att.net)
Steve Huber (740) 654-3137
facilities coordinator [shuber57 @ yahoo . com](mailto:shuber57@yahoo.com)
Angie & Kent Kerns (740) 654-2588
religious education [kwkerns @ gmail . com](mailto:kwkerns@gmail.com)
Liz Latorre (740) 243-1872
liturgical music [lizlatorre @ gmail . com](mailto:lizlatorre@gmail.com)

The St Bernadette Parish office is in the Mary Good Center, across the back parking lot from the school.
Hours are: 9 am-1 pm, MWThF; 11 am-1 pm, Tu.
1343 Wheeling Rd NE,
Lancaster, OH 43130-8701 (740) 654-1893
[http:// stbernadetteparish . net](http://stbernadetteparish.net)

at Bremen St Mary Parish

Ben Factor
liturgical music [b_factor @ lancaster . k12.oh.us](mailto:b_factor@lancaster.k12.oh.us)

The St Mary Parish office is at the church vestibule.
Hours are 9-11 AM, Tuesdays.
602 Marietta St,
Bremen, OH 43107 (740) 569-7929

at both parishes

Stephen Karnes (740) 654-1893
bookkeeper [stbernbook @ gmail . com](mailto:stbernbook@gmail.com)
Kathy Kehnast (740) 654-1893
pastoral coordinator [stbernparish @ yahoo . com](mailto:stbernparish@yahoo.com)
Julie & Chase Stafford (740) 808-7294
youth ministry [maristellspirit @ gmail . com](mailto:maristellspirit@gmail.com)

Saint Bernadette School

Pam Eltringham [peltring @ cducation . org](mailto:peltring@cducation.org)
principal (740) 654-3137
Barb Huber [bhuber @ cducation . org](mailto:bhuber@cducation.org)
secretary (740) 654-3137

Saint Bernadette School is located at
1325 Wheeling Rd, Lancaster, OH 43130-8701
[stbernlan @ cducation . org](mailto:stbernlan@cducation.org)
[www . stbernadetteschool . com](http://www.stbernadetteschool.com)

sacramental life

Baptism

To have a child baptized, you must register and attend a class as a couple (unless attendance just isn't possible, in which case some discussion with Kathy Kehnast will be necessary). Sessions are held quarterly for both parishes. Try to attend before the child is born. Next session is tentatively planned for October 19. If you are expecting or have a new born or somehow have somehow haven't gotten around to have an older child baptized, call Kathy to make plans.

Please don't ask if you "have to go." This is an opportunity to meet with parents of children about the same age as your little one; those parents are in the same wonderful boat as you are.

At least one parent must be a practicing Catholic. Both godparents need to be practicing Catholics. If you don't attend Sunday Mass regularly (a major component of being a practicing Catholic!), there is something you can do about it: Start coming to Sunday Mass.

Penance

The priest is available for Penance

- at St Bernadette Saturdays at 3 PM and Thursdays at 5:30 PM, and
- at St Mary Bremen on Sunday at 8 AM.

In addition to Advent and Lenten Penance Services, every Catholic priest is available whenever there is a need. There are Penance opportunities for parochial school children four times during the year so that they will learn **the beauty of frequent confession**. The Church's law requires us to receive the sacrament of Penance at least once a year.

Anointing and Care of the Sick

The Sick receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick when dangerously ill, facing major surgery, or suffering from the ravages of old age. We celebrate the sacrament communally at a Sunday Mass before Advent and during the Easter season so that we can all pray with you for "health of mind and body."

And, we are happy to bring Penance, Anointing, and Holy Communion to the homes or hospitals of the sick or shut in. It is very helpful to call the parish office to let us know before a hospitalization or when it has been too long since the sacraments were last available.

Holy Matrimony

Couples wishing to marry should contact the parish office six months before they wish to celebrate the sacrament. Why so long? Because **this sacrament, not just the ceremony, requires serious preparation**. And the Church needs to be involved in that preparation. Remember, Catholics who marry outside the Church have left the sacramental life and need to change that situation before receiving the other sacraments.

The Church wishes to support couples **through the years** of their married life. That's why our diocese offers programs to enhance married life. To learn about these programs, watch the weekly bulletin.

praying with the Church

at Mass today the church prays :

Show favor, O Lord, to your servants and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace, that, made fervent in hope, faith and charity, they may be ever watchful in keeping your commands. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

in july the pope is praying for lapsed christians

That our brothers and sisters who have strayed from the faith, through our prayer and witness to the Gospel, may rediscover the merciful closeness of the Lord and the beauty of the Christian life.

we listen to God's word ... at sunday Mass

Sunday, July 23, 16th Sunday Wisdom 12:13-19 Psalm 86
Romans 8:26-27 **Matthew 13:24-43**

Sunday, July 30, 17th Sunday 1 Kings 3:5-12 Psalm 119
Romans 8:28-30 **Matthew 13:44-52**

... during the week

Mon, July 24 Exodus 14:5-18 Ex 15 **Matthew 12:38-42**

Tues, July 25 2 Cor 4:7-15 Ps 126 **Matthew 20:20-28**

Weds, July 26 Exodus 16:1-15 Ps 78 **Matthew 13:1-9**

Thurs, July 27 Exodus 19:1-20 Dan 3 **Matthew 13:10-17**

Fri, July 28 Exodus 20:1-17 Ps 19 **Matthew 13:18-23**

Sat, July 29 Exodus 24:3-8 Ps 50 **Matthew 13:24-30**

let us adore Him

Spend a **holy hour** with our Lord in the presence of his Blessed Sacrament in either of our parish churches. Or spend a **few holy minutes**. We try to keep both churches open all through the daylight hours. Anybody can come, any time. Perhaps you could.

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ministry at Mass at st mary

July 23 & July 30	lector	servers	Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion	gifts	sacristan / usher
Sunday 8:30 AM	Jeanne Schmelzer	Brooke Holt, Jillian Wilkinson	Pam Redding, Tyna Schmelzer-Fox, Angi Skinner	Maurice Schmelzer family	Nikki Schmelzer
next Sunday	Barb VanFossen-Cook	Regan Conrad Alex Schmelzer	Dismas Schmelzer, Jim Schmelzer, Barb VanFossen-Cook	Nick Schmelzer family	Jim Schmelzer

at st bernadette parish

Mass intentions at st bernadette

The intention for Sunday Mass is the good of the people of the parish.

Monday, July 24 8:20 AM Glen Edgar
Wednesday, July 26 8:20 AM John & Ann Muetzel
Thursday, July 27 6 PM Louise Mathias
Friday, July 28 8:20 AM Donald Maurice Bolden
Saturday, July 29 4 PM Beth Essman Dickson

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feast days this week

July 24 Saint **Sharbel Makhlu**, priest
July 25 Saint **James**, apostle
July 26 Saint **Joachim & Anne**, parents of the Virgin Mary
July 29 Saint **Martha**

in both parishes

christian initiation

Speaking of spreading the word about our Catholic Christian faith, have you invited someone yet **to join the Church in the coming year? Will you help them by accompanying them through the RCIA process?** It begins soon after the feast of the Assumption, Aug 15. So we need to get a move on.

at st mary parish

bremen food pantry

The Bremen Food Pantry needs **school supplies to help poor children in our community**. Check the list of needs on the bulletin boards and place your donation in the box in the Parish Hall today. This will help the Pantry open house on Saturday, Aug 5, from 9-11 AM. Any family in need can stop by that day at the Pantry to receive school supplies.

st vincent de paul at bremen

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Bremen takes up a **collection after Mass on the first Sunday** of every month. **New members** are always welcome. Call Angi Skinner at (740) 438-0027.

summer square dance

Summer means square dancing at Schmelzer's Grove. Mark your calendars on Sunday evening, Aug 13, from 7-9:30 PM. Admission is \$4 per person.

Mass intention at st mary

Tuesday morning Mass will be celebrated for Lucille Tobin. The Sunday Mass is offered for the people of the parish.

ministry at Mass at st bernadette

	lector	Servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion			
Saturday,	4:00 PM	Tara Craaybeek	Clara & Susan Craaybeek, Eve Darfus	Terry Carpenter Marguerite Grimm	Kathy Kehnast Sandy Landefeld	Jim & Becky Kuhn
Sunday, July 23,	11:00 AM	Jim Merk	Collin & Emma McCrady, Caroline Messerly	Nancy Griffith Rita Merk	Larry Sanford Teresa Scarpitti	Anna Seigny David Shonk
Monday,	8:20 AM	Mary Jane Vajen	Kendall & Morgan Cox	Patricia Dreyer	Kathy Kehnast	
Wednesday,	8:20 AM	Bob Christy	Joey Mannella, Silus Hopkins	Angie Christy	Mary Jane Vajen	
Thursday,	6:00 PM	Kathy Kehnast	Mitchell Ortiz, Daschel Neighbor	Lee Guinan	Paul Lonergan	
Friday,	8:20 AM	Jim Merk	Gunner & Amelia Robertson	Jim Merk	Rita Merk	
Saturday,	4:00 PM	Bob Christy	Abby, Mary & Sam Frazier	Angie Christy Susan Garrett	Joyce Guenther Brad Rider	Craig Shaw Mickey Steyaert
Sunday, July 30,	11:00 AM	Denny Forquer	Samantha Kerns, Dominic & Emeline Neighbor	Pat Dreyer Pat Gins	John & Teresa Hartig	Ben Peters Jean Robertson

in the diocese of columbus

a pilgrimage to carey for a novena

The Basilica & National Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation, Carey, Ohio invites you to come and pray during the Novena of Our Lady, Aug 6-14 at 8 PM (Sunday 2:30 PM). Fr Paul Gawlowski will be the novena preacher. Join in a lot or a little of this journey of faith, hope and healing. For information call (419) 396-7107 or visit olcshrine.com.

city wide prayer gathering

(AND COUNTRY WIDE, TOO!)

On Saturday, Aug 5, from 9 AM until noon, the Columbus Catholic Renewal will host this prayer gathering at Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, 5225 Refugee Road, Columbus. It includes Mass celebrated by Fr Dean Mathewson, breakfast, prayer ministry, confession, fellowship, and a teaching on "Surrendering" by Deacon Ed Shikina. Bring a dish to share and bring a friend. For information call Cheryl at (614) 861-1242.

st mary in german village event

A BEAUTIFUL OLD CHURCH WITH STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS

All are invited to the Ohio Theater on Monday, July 31, at 5:30 PM for a campaign kick-off to "Restore Renew Revitalize" St Mary Church in German Village. There is no charge for admission or refreshments, but a free will offering will be taken up during the evening, which includes a showing of the movie "The Bells of St Mary's." RSVP by July 25 to sheilalutz13@gmail.com.

catholic men's ministry

Now, more than ever, we need Catholic Male Leadership. Weekly Faith Sharing groups have been instrumental in bringing men together and fostering growth in their Catholic faith. Programs like "Iron Sharpens Iron" and "That Man Is You!" continue to grow throughout the Columbus Diocese and are changing lives. Get plugged in and learn more about the many programs and opportunities that are available. For information call Patrick Gins at (740) 536-7402.

take a fresh look at your marriage

Treat yourselves to a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend and enrich your lives together. The next weekend in central Ohio is Sept 15-17. For information or to apply, contact Paul or Marilou Clouse at (614) 834-6880 or visit www.wmccolumbus.org.

helping moms who have chosen life



Angels Nurture & Disciple ("AND") Inc is a pro-life organization that seeks to inspire, empower, and facilitate significant improvement in the educational, career, financial, and spiritual well-being of **single mothers who have chosen life** for their children. Visit us at angelsand.org to learn more. To volunteer or support, contact Gina McCauley at gina@angelsand.org or

(440) 749-5477.

saint mother teresa award

FOR CHARITY, COMPASSION AND SERVICE

This new award recognizes those special women in our diocese who exemplify the life of Christ and the spirit of Mother Teresa: women who are strong in their Catholic faith, who are engaged and involved in their parish communities, and whose example of devotion and dedication is in the tradition and spirit of this holy and humble saint. The Diocesan Council of Catholic Women will celebrate the contributions of these women on Aug 27 at 4:30 PM at Immaculate Conception Parish. For information about nomination, tables, or tickets, contact the DCCW Office at (614) 228-8601 or mjmccormick@columbuscatholic.org. To acknowledge a woman in your parish with your nomination, write about 250 words describing her spirituality and all the ways this woman demonstrates those unique attributes reminiscent of Mother Teresa's life and ministry. Essays must be received by Aug 8 at the DCCW, 197 E. Gay St., Columbus, OH 43215.

men's silent retreat

The annual Catholic Laymen's Fall Silent Retreat will be held at St Therese Retreat Center from 6 PM on Friday, Sept 8, through noon Mass on Sunday, Sept 10. In reflection sessions, Fr Dave Pivonka, TOR, will lead men to appreciate the power of the Holy Spirit by developing his theme **To Have a Relationship with the Holy Spirit, His Mercy is Everlasting**. Cost is \$150. Make your reservation now and consider bringing a friend. Contact Charles Kielkopf at (614) 268-0175 or kielkopf.1@osu.edu.

marriage preparation volunteers

Looking for a way to serve in 2017? Engaged couples in our diocese need your help. Volunteer to serve on the diocesan **Marriage Preparation Team** as a speaker and presenter. Present virtues-based topics to engaged couples preparing for the Sacrament of Matrimony. **If you are currently married, and have wisdom and experience to share**, you already qualify. For

information, contact Kathleen Hall at khall @ columbuscatholic . org or (614) 241-2560.

plan your family naturally

Natural family planning (NFP) uses modern scientific knowledge of fertility to allow married couples to safely and effectively achieve or postpone pregnancy. Today's NFP is up to 99% effective and completely natural. The benefits of NFP go beyond family planning; for articles and to read one couple's story visit [www . ForYourMarriage . org](http://www.ForYourMarriage.org). For information about NFP or to register for a diocesan NFP workshop, contact the Marriage and Family Life Office at 614/241-2560.

new diocesan website

The Diocese of Columbus has a new website—[www . columbuscatholic . org](http://www.columbuscatholic.org). The new site provides greater access to news and information from both the Catholic Times and Catholic News Service, improved navigation and search capabilities, language translation, mobile device compatibility, and other features. Make sure to bookmark [www . columbuscatholic . org](http://www.columbuscatholic.org) in your computer, tablet, or smartphone – it's your new gateway to everything Catholic in central, southern and eastern Ohio. For information, contact George Jones at [gjones @ columbuscatholic . org](mailto:gjones@columbuscatholic.org).

the bishop's annual appeal

baa results so far

“LIVING THE GOSPEL IN FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY”

The Bishop's Annual Appeal is **winding down at St Bernadette and at St Mary**. It's time for us to do what we can to support the programs and ministries that benefit both our parishes and the wider community. The Appeal **supports our parish schools of religion and the education of our future priests and deacons, and many families in need of our help**. Your gift and your prayers will help to make this year's appeal a success. Every contribution counts; every dollar that we raise over the stated goal will be returned to our parishes to benefit our communities directly. Last year St Bernadette pledged slightly over and collected slightly under the goal. Bremen St Mary pledged well over the goal and has received the rebate of \$4,947 from the diocese. So, we know we can do this if, after thoughtful consideration and prayer, every one of us gives according to our ability. We are blessed with much; let us remember the needs of others. **If you have not yet been able to make a pledge, extra BAA envelopes are available in the church vestibules.**

Here are the results at our parishes to date.

	St Bernadette	%of goal	Bremen St Mary	%of goal	Diocese of Columbus	% of goal
total households	452		130			
households participating	124	27%	50	38%		
amount pledged	\$ 36,480	86%	\$ 17,576	141%	\$ 6,569,228	101%
average gift	\$ 294		\$ 352			
total paid	\$ 17,310	41%	\$ 5,711	46%		
BAA goal	\$ 42,210		\$ 12,443		\$ 6,500,000	

baa prayer

Heavenly Father,
we are always thankful for all you have given us.
We are especially grateful
that you have sent to us your Son to be our Savior.
That is the true Good News:
that you love us and call us to yourself.
Help us to live this Good News, this Gospel,
in Faith, Hope, and Charity.
Help us to respond generously to your love
by sharing our material blessings
for the good of all in our diocese.
Send your Spirit to dwell in our hearts,
so that all we do may give praise and honor to your name.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

more to think about

safe environment reminder

A complete copy of the **parish safe environment policies and procedures**, including the diocesan policies and guidelines for parish youth ministry is available by calling either parish office.

All adults who have not previously attended a **Protecting God's Children training session sponsored by the diocese** of Columbus are urged to do so. A schedule of training sessions can be found at www.virtus.org.

Articles on **sexual abuse prevention** are available at [www . virtus . org](http://www.virtus.org). All adults are encouraged to access this website monthly and read the articles. Contact information for **reporting suspected abuse of minors** is from the parish office.

confessions & weekday Mass nearby ... these times sometimes change, though, so be sure to call ahead!

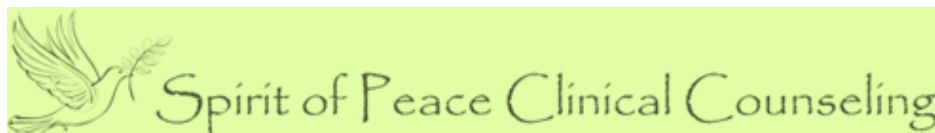
	Bremen St Mary	Lancaster St Bernadette	Lancaster St Mary	Lancaster St Mark	Sugar Grove St Joseph	Circleville St Joseph	Logan St John
Monday		8:20 AM	7 AM	8 AM	8 AM	9 AM	8 AM
Tuesday	8:20 AM		9 AM	8 AM	NOON	7 AM	8 AM
Wednesday		8:20 AM	7 AM	6 PM	6:30 PM	9 AM	9 AM
Thursday		6 PM	9 AM	8 AM	NOON		
Friday		8:20 AM		8 AM	8 AM	9 AM	8 AM
Saturday		9 AM Mass on 1st Saturday only				10 AM	9 AM
confessions	Sunday @ 8AM	Thursday @ 5:30 PM Saturday @ 3 PM & @ 8:30 AM on 1st Saturday only	Saturday @ 4 PM	Saturday @ 5:30 PM	½ hour before Mass	Saturday @ 4 PM	Saturday @ 4 PM

A Christian Counseling Service Comes to Town! ... and St Bernadette Rectory Is Back in Service!

Here's the back story. I have continued to live in the rectory at Bremen St Mary (where I moved in 2006) since taking the additional pastorate at St Bernadette (in 2009). The reason was simple: Both houses are suitable, but St Mary had invested in modest but necessary upgrades when I had arrived (carpeting, flooring, painting, some new furniture). It seemed disrespectful of that investment to have more such upgrades for St Bernadette's rectory and then to leave the Bremen expenses without any usage. And, besides, with careful calculation I determined that the expense of traveling from Bremen to Lancaster and back each day is exactly the same as the trip from Lancaster to Bremen. And I realized that I would have to make the trip every day to be pastor of both parishes. So, the St Bernadette rectory stood empty. Possible uses for various parish purposes, as a home for a retired priest or some religious sisters, as well as possible rental income all came to naught. And yet a rectory needs to be available on such a location for the priest who would someday replace me.

After eight years sitting unoccupied, the rectory at St Bernadette can soon return to practical service. It has long been my impression that there is a crying need for counseling with a Catholic perspective. I have been aware for a few years that there has been a wonderful blossoming of local counseling practices in the Columbus area. But that was in Columbus, a long way off for people in crisis. I was delighted to find that at St Bernadette we could host such a long-needed service for parishioners and for our neighbors, Catholic and otherwise.

Several parishes in our diocese have agreements for such use of parish property in service of the ministry of psychological assistance for local people. To have that at Lancaster would be a great blessing. Spirit of Peace Counseling of Columbus seems to fit the bill. It is a Christian service in which a large portion of the professional staff have solid grounding in Catholic Christian principles about the sacramental and moral life. They are rooted in prayerful service of the Faith. They are based in northwest Columbus but have satellite centers at St Catherine Parish in Bexley, St Brendan in Dublin, St Matthew in Gahanna, St John Neumann in Sunbury, and other locations in Canal Winchester, Circleville, Grove City, and Powell.



I explained to the Spirit of Peace Clinical Counseling service leadership that, whenever there might arise a need for that rectory to serve as residence for a pastor of St Bernadette—at the retirement, death, sickness, dismissal, or whatever of the incumbent pastor—the rectory would have to be able to be returned to the sole use of St Bernadette Parish and the Diocese of Columbus. With the careful consideration of Bishop Campbell and after consultation with parish leaders, we (the bishop, the pastor, and Spirit of Peace) have entered into a carefully considered agreement. There will be no money passed between the parish and SoPCC. There will ordinarily be a charge for services to the clients by SoPCC. The use of the property is an arrangement that is “at will”, and any of these parties may terminate this relationship at any time with a month's written notice to the other party.

Julie Stalford, a parishioner at St Bernadette, recently graduated with a Master of Arts degree in Clinical Social Work from Ohio University and became a licensed professional clinical counselor practicing in that field, joining the team of Spirit of Peace. She is a clinical therapist offering Catholic/Christian counseling services here at St Bernadette for greater Fairfield county. She has been approved by the State of Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board. She is a member of the Clinical Social Work Association. She also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and a Bachelor's in Spanish from Bradley University. Prior work experience includes extensive work overseas as a coordinator for Peace Corps, Paraguay, a religious education director at St Martins Church in Florida, and conducting women and teen retreats. She has experience in grief counseling, teen issues (including social media), women's issues, anxiety, depression, life transitions, spiritual issues, adult children of alcoholics, and the St Thomas Aquinas “Affirmation” psychotherapy discipline. In addition, she is fluent in Spanish. Julie's clientele will include children, adolescents, or adults, as individuals, families, or groups.

I and other parishioners have come to know not only of the competence she can bring to that role, but also of her lively sense of the parish's role. For two years Julie and her husband Chase (with the cooperation of their toddler daughter and infant son) have been leading the wonderful parish effort of the yDisciple youth group. From conversations about this service, I realized that Julie would provide a Catholic faith-filled service to people in need. And do that with sensitivity and kindness.

Anyone can contact Julie to schedule an appointment by calling (210) 781-0254 or by emailing julie.sopcc@gmail.com.

The Spirit of Peace website is spiritofpeaceclinicalcounseling.com.

—Father Kessler

Receiving Holy Communion

When we come to Mass, we are encouraged to come to Holy Communion. So why don't we invite everyone to Holy Communion? Because it is essential that we be properly prepared for the sacrament.

First that means being a part of the Church: A communicant must be a baptized Catholic. Many Protestant communities invite everyone attending a communion service to receive Holy Communion. We respect their desire to be hospitable. But we know that we are not permitted by our own Catholic Faith to receive Communion. We Catholics (along with the Eastern Orthodox) are unique in believing something crucially different about Holy Communion: At the Consecration of the Mass, the bread and wine become, substantially, the Body and Blood of Christ. For us it is wholly inappropriate to receive Holy Communion except at the Catholic Eucharist. It is forbidden by the law of the Catholic Church to give Holy Communion to those who aren't Catholic or for us Catholics to go to Holy Communion at non-Catholic services. It is painful, but it is right. And we pray for the day when all Christians will share the one Eucharistic Faith.

And being prepared means that we must be in the state of grace. A Catholic who is married out of the Church or is aware of a serious sin which has not been confessed in the Sacrament of Penance is not properly prepared. Something can be done about that; it is not the Church's intention to exclude anyone permanently.

Finally, a Catholic who has not observed the hour-long fast (except for the hospitalized or those in a nursing home) is not properly prepared. There is a wisdom in the Church's assigning that fast: not only is there a (very) small mortification to get ready for the great Eucharistic gift of the Lord's love, but there is a protection of the privacy of a person who doesn't choose to receive communion at a given Eucharist. It never is anyone else's business why someone doesn't receive. The possibility that the person has not observed the fast just makes the pointless speculation about motive all the more useless.

Every once in a while, it is good to review what our bishops have to say about this matter.

Guidelines for the Reception of Communion

On November 14, 1996, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the following guidelines on the reception of communion. These guidelines replace the guidelines approved by the Administrative Committee of the NCCB in November 1986. The guidelines, which are to be included in missalettes and other participation aids published in the United States, seek to remind all those who may attend Catholic liturgies of the present discipline of the Church with regard to the sharing of eucharistic communion.

For Catholics

As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion. We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord without prior sacramental confession except for a grave reason where there is no opportunity for confession. In this case, the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, including the intention of confessing as soon as possible (canon 916). A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance is encouraged for all.

For our fellow Christians

We welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist as our brothers and sisters. We pray that our common baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions which separate us. We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear, in keeping with Christ's prayer for us "that they may all be one" (John 17:21).

Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion. Eucharistic sharing in exceptional circumstances by other Christians requires permission according to the directives of the diocesan bishop and the provisions of canon law (canon 844 § 4). Members of the Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Polish National Catholic Church are urged to respect the discipline of their own Churches. According to Roman Catholic discipline, the Code of Canon Law does not object to the reception of communion by Christians of these Churches (canon 844 § 3).

For Those Not Receiving Holy Communion

All who are not receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.

For non-Christians

We also welcome to this celebration those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. While we cannot admit them to Holy Communion, we ask them to offer their prayers for the peace and the unity of the human family.

From the American bishops' website (<http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/current/intercom.shtml>)

— Father Kessler

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Friday & Saturday: 11a-2p/4-11p
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