

Fr. Simon Sez



West Whitlock Bay Resort River Mass Saturdays May 27 - July 1, 2023 at 8:15 p.m.

except Saturday, June 3, 2023: Are we going to have the River Mass this summer? What about the 6:30 p.m. Saturday evening Sunday Vigil Mass? It's decision time! Upon reflection, last summer's adjustment of having both Masses worked out very well with attendance and people stepping up to help make the tight timing work in terms of sacristan help after the 6:30 p.m. and before the 8:15 p.m. Masses. I am asking for that same help this summer.

It has always been a matter of Canon Law (the law of the Church) that a priest is allowed a maximum of three Masses per weekend unless the bishop gives approval otherwise. This has not been strictly enforced but that is changing. Bishop DeGrood is serious about wanting happy, healthy, and holy priests. He is not allowing for exceptions on this number of weekend Masses. Fr. Joseph Holzhauser and I discussed the impact this will have on the River Mass as effective Wednesday, July 5, 2023 when he will be serving as the pastor, and I will be the parochial vicar (associate) for the parishes in Pierre, Onida, Gettysburg, and Hoven. We agreed that the long standing tradition of the summer River Mass will have to end since it is a Mass of convenience and accommodation, not a regularly scheduled parish Mass. (The schedule for the regular parish Masses will still have to be worked out.)

I streamlined the 6:30 p.m. Mass last summer so that I could be heading out to the river to the next Mass before 7:30 p.m. I need to do that again. We will not schedule Altar servers and cantors. I will cantor the Mass parts and a couple verses of the opening and closing hymns a cappella (Italian for singing unaccompanied by musical instruments). Also, attendance drops significantly at the 6:30 p.m. Mass. It is not necessary to have an Extraordinary Eucharistic Minister scheduled.

And now for a couple considerations...I plan on being gone to a nephew's wedding the weekend of June 3 - 4, 2023. Our substitute priest, Fr. David Axtmann will not be available for noon confessions and the River Mass on Saturday, June 3rd. So, I am cancelling both. The River Mass with the largest attendance is the weekend of July 4th. Since this will also be the last River Mass of a decades long tradition, I would like people of the area to discuss how we should celebrate its history and historic occasion. Could we do a social gathering before and/or after that 8:15 p.m. Mass at the resort? How should we do it? Talk about it amongst yourselves and let me know what you think.

So, we will start the River Mass Memorial Weekend, Saturday evening, May 27th at 8:15 p.m. and end the thirty-five plus years summer tradition Saturday evening, July 1, 2023 with the exception that there will not be a June 3rd Mass. Spread the word!

Building His House: Scott Hahn Reflects on the Fifth Sunday of Easter



Acts 6:1-7
Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19
1 Peter 2:4-9
John 14:1-12

By His death, Resurrection, and Ascension, Jesus has gone ahead to prepare a place

for us in His Father's house.

His Father's house is no longer a temple made by human hands. It is the spiritual house of the Church, built on the living stone of Christ's body.

As Peter interprets the Scriptures in today's Epistle, Jesus is the "stone" destined to be rejected by men but made the precious cornerstone of God's dwelling on earth (see Psalm 118:22; Isaiah 8:14; 28:16).

Each of us is called to be a living stone in God's building (see 1 Corinthians 3:9, 16). In this edifice of the Spirit, we are to be "holy priests" offering up "spiritual sacrifices"—all our prayer, work and intentions—to God.

This is our lofty calling as Christians. This is why Christ led us out of the darkness of sin and death as Moses led the Israelites from bondage in Egypt.

God's covenant with Israel made them a royal and priestly people who were to announce His praises (see Exodus 19:6). By our faith in Christ's new covenant, we have been made heirs of this chosen race, called to glorify the Father in the temple of our bodies (see 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 12:1).

In today's First Reading, we see the spiritual house of the Church being built up as the Apostles consecrate seven deacons so they can devote themselves more fully to the "ministry of the Word."

The Lord's Word is upright and all His works trustworthy, we sing in today's Psalm. So we can trust Jesus when He tells us never to be troubled but to believe that His Word and works come from the Father.

His Word continues its work in the world through the Church. We see its beginnings today in Jerusalem. It is destined to spread with influence and power (see Acts 19:20) and to become the imperishable seed by which every heart is born anew (see 1 Peter 1:23).

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