

BULLETIN – MAY 17

We are so proud of our high school graduates, several of whom are able to join us this Sunday for our annual Seniors' Mass and breakfast. This year's grads are, along with their school:

Flickinger, Paul David	Home school
Hassinger, Margaret Josephine	WCHS
Kohane, Christopher John	WCHS
Lantinga, Austin James	Northview
Raap, Marvin Leo, Jr.	Coopersville
Raap, Megan Nicole	Coopersville
Rainwater, Alexis Dawn	W.M. Academy of Env. Science
Sack, Riley John	WCHS
Walters, Benjamin Joseph	WCHS

Congratulations to those confirmed by Bishop Walkowiak this past Wednesday, May 13! We'll have their names in next week's bulletin.

“Taken up into heaven.” What does that mean? We've all seen artistic depictions of the Ascension of Christ. They all depend on the New Testament's verbal descriptions of what the Apostles saw and experienced in those moments on Mount Tabor. It left them in such a state of awe that angels had to appear and tell them to go and get busy. And the first thing they did was to return to Jerusalem, to the upper room, to engage in intense and vigilant prayer. They were joined in those days leading up to Pentecost by Mary, the mother of Jesus, and about a hundred other followers.

The late-night radio profiteers prowl the air waves looking for the gullible, the superstitious, and the conspiracy theorists, filling their minds with things like, “What if Jesus was an alien who was returning to his mother ship?” The great wheel in the sky seen by the prophet Ezekiel, Elijah's going up to heaven in a fiery chariot, and the Lord's own Ascension all provide these folks with incontrovertible “proof” that all the great religions were planted in our minds and hearts by our alien masters and ancestors on other planets. Some folks just can't be satisfied with divine revelation.

The problem with the Ascension, if indeed it *is* a problem, is that we are finite human beings. We are limited in and by space and time. If we have never experienced weightlessness, it's a concept that we can only imagine. The child in the womb has no concept of what life is like on the outside. (And sometimes we're a little sorry we ever emerged to find out!) And so it is with infinity and eternity. Every time you look at your watch or check your GPS, you are reinforcing the fact that measurements of time and space are important facts of our life here on earth. But not in heaven. And that's hard to imagine. It's why many young people are turned off at the prospect of “spending” eternity in some boring place in the clouds, so often pictured as walking around vested in white garments and playing harps. Big deal. Yawn. Who cares?

The Ascension of Our Lord should mean exploration, discovery, adventure! Do we trust Jesus Christ or not? When he says, “I will come back and take you with me, so you also may be where I am” (John 14:3), do you believe it? Well, then, let's act like it!

The Ascension should enkindle in us the hope and eagerness and desire for union with God in the Kingdom, which is not just the static boredom of clouds and harps, but endless revelation and discovery, where a thousand years of earthly time is like the blink of an eye (cf. II Peter 3:8), where we shall know even as we have been known (cf. I Cor. 13:12). The one thing we are *not* to do is spend our time worrying about the “end times” (cf. Matthew 24:36). Let those who want to turn God’s Word into a board game go ahead and play “Armageddon.” *Our* job as disciples and believers is to make the Kingdom a reality in the lives of as many as possible *right now*, to kindle in them the same hope and eagerness for eternal life with God that should motivate us. *Then* we’re doing Christ’s work, focusing on the Kingdom while paying profound attention to the spiritual and physical needs of those around us on earth and accompanying them on their journey home.

Here’s a Swift kick. . . British political philosopher Adam Swift (b. 1961) specializes in debates surrounding liberal egalitarianism. He recently completed a study which shows that parents who read bedtime stories to their children give those children an unequal (and therefore obviously unfair) advantage over children who are not read to at bedtime. We’re waiting for someone with the nanny state mentality to incorporate this “discovery” into the curriculum of all parenting classes, and make all expectant parents (especially those in intact marriages) feel guilty and responsible for making life so unfair for other people’s deprived children.

Ah, but the professor Swiftly issued a bit of a disclaimer: “I don’t think parents reading their children bedtime stories should constantly have in their minds the way that they are unfairly disadvantaging other people’s children, but I think they should have that thought occasionally,” he quipped. So he’s not really advocating taking action against parents who read to their children. However, he’s also not claiming responsibility for those who are eager to blame “people of privilege,” whoever they may be, for all the world’s ills, poverty, disease, famine, climate change, abuse, brutality, stray voltage, bedbugs, and just general unhappiness. If his theory hadn’t occurred to them before, it certainly will now. No matter how stupid the idea, some bureaucrat somewhere has found a way to turn it into a regulation with added fees in order to justify the existence of the bureaucracy.

The push for total egalitarianism or a false equality comes from people who are fundamentally unhappy. We had a joyless nitwit professor in the seminary who insisted that laughter was always wrong, because it always came at *somebody’s* expense. That’s basically the position of the bouncing boobs who tell us that it’s wrong to ever be happy because there are some people who aren’t. Most of us know that we often have to *work* for happiness, which in the long run makes the advocates of egalitarianism the proponents of the ultimate sloth.

Not an inerrant source. Once again proving beyond all doubt that he does not share in the charism of infallibility, the pastor consumes another healthy helping of humble pie and admits to having gotten the date of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical *Rerum novarum* incorrect in last week’s bulletin. The correct year of publication was 1891. God bless you!

Fr. Den

Parish humor. At a pastors' meeting, the topic of how rumors get started came up. One pastor remarked, "Oh, tell me about it. Just last Sunday after church, a woman came up to me with a potentially scandalous story about another family in the parish which I knew to be completely false. I asked her where she had heard it, and she named one of the well-known old gossips. I tried calling the lady all week to head her off at the pass, but I couldn't get ahold of her."

"She'd skipped town?" a fellow pastor asked.

"Oh, no, I suspect she was engaged in her favorite hobby," the first pastor replied. "Every time I called her number, I got a biddy signal."