



Adoremus in Aeternum Sanctissimum Sacramentum
Catholic Church of the Blessed Sacrament
2564 Hale Ave. Memphis, TN 38112

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U.I.O.G.D.

August 8, 2020

Feast of St. John Vianney (Traditional Calendar)

“Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” Jesus said, “Come.” Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus.

Dear Blessed Sacrament Family,

The above words from today’s Gospel from St. Matthew (in the Ordinary Form) resound in my heart as I address you for the first time as your new shepherd. I had intended to address you later this month with a letter outlining my vision for the future of our parish, but some recent developments have made me realize the importance of this initial letter. Let me preface everything by saying that my history with Blessed Sacrament goes back almost 20 years when I first attended Mass here while Fr. Morgera was pastor and I discovered the Traditional Mass. Since those high school days and early discernment, I have ministered at the Altar for a few Solemn Masses here, including one for the 100th Anniversary of the Parish back in 2012. In some ways, I can’t help but see my assignment here this year as somewhat of a manifestation of God’s Providence.

First and foremost, I can’t stress enough the truth that **Blessed Sacrament is NOT being suppressed or closing**. Never, in his conversations with me and the future of our Parish, has the Bishop mentioned or given any indication that the Parish was closing. I do not know where this foul rumor originated, but am certain that it ultimately has the Father of Lies at its genesis and anyone who perpetuates it is simply lending himself/herself to the divisive work of Satan. The reality is that both Blessed Sacrament and Little Flower are now the first parishes in Shelby County to share on priest. This is nothing new for our brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Memphis outside of Shelby County. Several parishes share one priest with another parish/other parishes. Outside of our Diocese, especially in bigger dioceses, several parishes (sometimes 3 or 4) share one or two priests. It’s simply the reality of the institutional Church in our times in this country. We happen to be on the frontier of this inevitable reality in our deanery (cluster of parishes in a particular region of the Diocese).

Some understandably struggle and object to the recent changes in Mass schedules, parish activities, and pastoral living arrangements. Change is difficult for everyone—it is difficult for you; it is difficult for the parishioners of Little Flower; and it is difficult for me. The changes that were made and the changes and adaptations that lie ahead of us were made and will be made with the object of a more efficient use of resources: personnel and material (facilities). I do not have space in this letter to explain each and every one in detail, but I assure you that simply boils down to a matter of the number of Masses I am limited to celebrate in a day and the space capacity of the buildings at Blessed Sacrament (church and convent for PRE). When you think about it, this is a good thing, because it means that—in some ways—Blessed Sacrament parish is outgrowing and has outgrown its facilities. This is not a new dilemma in the history of our parish, except that now, instead of founding another parish, we have the ability to share facilities with a sister parish. As you may recall from our history, Blessed Sacrament has been the “mother” of several other parishes in Shelby County. Every time the parish outgrew its space, another parish was founded. That’s why we still worship in what was originally intended to be a temporary church.

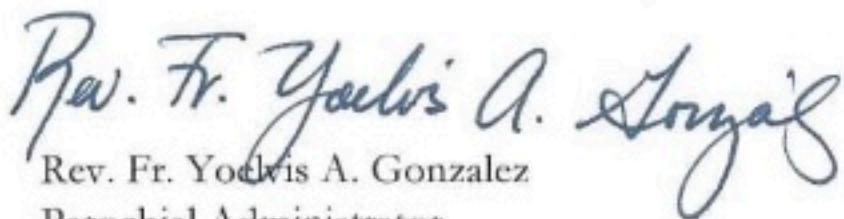
Today's Gospel is a continuation of the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes we heard last Sunday. What a marvelous miracle that was! As marvelous as it was, however, it was merely a preamble to our Lord's teaching of the great Mystery after which our parish is named: the Holy Eucharist—the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. But before the teaching about that great Mystery, we have the scene we heard today. It is a scene illustrating a test of faith. The Apostles have witnessed Jesus healing the sick and performing wondrous signs. They have just witnessed Him performing a great Messianic sign, miraculously feeding a multitude of probably over 10,000 people with nothing more than five loaves of bread and two fish...and twelve wicker baskets of fragments left over! And today, tossed about in a storm at sea, they witness His power over nature and the seemingly impossible: Jesus walks on water, just as you and I walk across our parking lot. Peter, always the intrepid one of the group, calls out to the Lord that if it is truly Him, to command him to walk out to Him. At the Lord's command, Peter steps out of the boat and *begins to walk on the water toward Jesus*. What a marvelous thing to do and witness! Until...Peter begins to take his sight off the Lord. Then he begins to sink.

We are in the same boat with Peter. For 108 years, we have witnessed Jesus working in our Parish through His Sacramental Presence and in the last nine years we have experienced great prosperity under the guidance of a faithful and prudent steward. And now, it seems that our little boat is tossed about the waves at sea and the howling and blowing winds of nay-sayers and gossips may fill our hearts with uncertainty and fear. But Jesus simply says to us: "Come." And with that one word, we are given today a very clear choice. Will we stay in our boat in fear? Will we, by our negativity and rebellious attitude sink the boat? Or...will we step onto the water and—keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus—do the seemingly impossible and walk on water. The choice is wholly ours.

I ask you today, as a parish family, to step on to the water with me, your new shepherd. Together, we will keep our eyes fixed on that Little White Host who becomes the Guest of our souls. We will walk on the waves toward Him. We will not doubt and give in to despair. I look forward to our future together and commend myself to your prayers as I assure you of mine—*oremus pro invicem!*

May God bless you, our Blessed Mother keep you, and the Little Flower befriend you.

In Christ,



Rev. Fr. Yoelvis A. Gonzalez
Parochial Administrator