FR. GARY'S CORNER

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Today we celebrate the profound mystery after which our parish is named. We celebrate the Ascension of the Lord. Jesus of Nazareth, fully human, flesh and blood, but also the Incarnate God, fully divine, was taken up into heaven at His Ascension. That means that human flesh, albeit glorified flesh, now dwells in the realms of heaven. Where Jesus has gone, we hope to follow. Ponder, for a moment, what that means for you and me if we die in friendship with Jesus.

As we celebrate this great mystery of our faith, we also celebrate our parish's 35th year since its establishment. We hope all parishioners can appreciate the countless blessings that have come to so many through the 35 years of parish life here at Ascension. We are grateful for our founding pastor, Fr. Albertson, and for the blessing brought by long-time pastor, Msgr. Tom Tank.

This year will also be a time of transition for our parish. Archbishop McKnight has accepted my request to retire and has named Fr. Scott Wallisch, formerly the pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shawnee, as the new pastor of Church of the Ascension. Fr. Scott will take over the reins of shepherding the Ascension community on July 1st. Fr. Wallisch is a beloved, holy and hard-working priest. This community will find him to be a great blessing.

Fr. Colm will also be taking on a new role and will become the chaplain of the Didde Catholic Campus center in Emporia, as well as the parochial administrator of St. Mary's Parish in Hartford, KS. Fr. Colm has been a great blessing to both the Ascension community and the St. Thomas Aquinas High School community, where he has served as chaplain for the past three years. His work at Aquinas has born amazing fruit. He will be sadly missed at Aquinas and here at Ascension.

But the archbishop has appointed a wonderful priest to fill Fr. Colm's role here at Ascension and at St. Thomas Aquinas. Fr. Aaron Waldeck, a dynamic young priest, will become parochial vicar here and chaplain at Aquinas. Fr. Waldeck currently serves as a parochial vicar at St. Michael the Archangel Parish and will move here effective July 1st. Fr. Waldeck will bring many talents and spiritual gifts to the Ascension and Aquinas communities. He, too, will be a great blessing.

Please pray for all the priests who will be taking new assignments in July and pray for your new pastor, Fr. Wallisch, and for Fr. Waldeck as they prepare to begin a new chapter here at Ascension.

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life,