"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

- Mt 28:19

The Ascension of the Lord

7th Sunday of Easter

24 May 2020
Parish Clergy & Staff Directory
Phone: 203.574.0017
Office Hours: Mon-Fri 8:30am-4:30pm
Website: www.waterburybasilica.org

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Rev. Dennis Vincenzo

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Welcome to the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception!
Believe. Belong. Be Inspired.
We pray the time you spend with us enriches your faith, touches your heart and mind, and bring you ever closer to our Lord
We invite those who attend Mass regularly but are not officially registered to join and belong!
Visit waterburybasilica.org for the online new parishioner form

MASS INTENTIONS

4:15pm Vigil
L/D members of the DiBone Family

Sun, May 24 - The Ascension of the Lord
6:30am
Joseph & Ruth Keeny,
+Michael Davignon, +Angela Mahoney
8:00am
In Thanksgiving to Jesus,
Georges-Daniel Telusa
10:00am
All Souls in Purgatory
12:00pm
+Dr. Robert Matusz
4:00pm
+Larry & Irene Voghel

Mon, May 25 - Memorial Day

6:00am
Sons/Daughters of Mary Immaculate
Honor & Thanksgiving to St. Pio,
+Rev. Peter Bennett, CS, +William Hutt

Tue, May 26 - St. Philip Neri

6:00am
P.J. Conway
7:00am
Sons/Daughters of Mary Immaculate
+Nicholas & Frances M. Klesch
12:10pm
+Yvette Reyes

Wed, May 27 - St. Augustine of Canterbury

6:00am
+Paul Keifer
7:00am
Priest Intentions
12:10pm
+Angelo & Rachael Perrone

Thu, May 28

6:00am
Priest Intentions
7:00am
For our parishioners
12:10pm
+Ronald Merancy

Fri, May 29

6:00am
For the Priests of our Archdiocese
7:00am
Sons/Daughters of Mary Immaculate
12:10pm
L/D Members of Healey Family

Sat, May 30

6:00am
+Cynthia Del Principe
12:10pm
+Janice Cicchetti & +William Hutt
4:15pm Vigil
+Dr. Daniel D’Angelo

Sun, May 31 - Pentecost Sunday

6:30am
+Martin Majtenyi
8:00am
+Eileen & Charles Weber
10:00am
R-Jay Domondon
12:00pm
+Helen DiStasio
4:00pm
+John & Maria Kenney,
+Fran Kenney Morin
Dear Friends,

This weekend (Memorial Day Weekend) has long been considered the beginning of the summer season. Filled with picnics, long weekend getaways and family visits, this year is certainly different from past Memorial Day weekends. Perhaps this year, with the added quiet time that many people are experiencing, we can pause for an added moment and remember the deeper and true meaning of Memorial Day, remembering those men and women who have died serving our country in the military services in the interest of freedom for our country.

Many families have deep roots in the varied branches of the military; parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts and siblings. For some families, service to our country goes back many generations, to the Civil War, WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, The Persian Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan. My own family has very limited involvement in the wars of our country. My grandfather served in WWI and my sister who is now a Sisters of Life nun, served as an Air Force nurse during the Persian Gulf war.

Many from Waterbury served in the many military conflicts of our country but one in particular comes to mind today, Fr. (Lt.) Thomas Conway. Fr. Conway was born in Waterbury, April 5th, 1908, became a priest and served as a navy chaplain on the USS Indianapolis. The USS Indianapolis was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine just after midnight, July 30th 1945. 1196 men were on board. The ship sank in 12 minutes. Over 900 men jumped into the water and there they stayed for four days before being rescued. Many of the men were eaten by sharks. With essentially no food or water and destitute day and night at sea, they were filled with fear. Many of these men were kids, teens and early 20’s. Fr. Conway who was 37 at the time, swam from man to man, raft to raft, comforting, baptizing, praying and giving hope. He is known to have saved close to 70 men before he himself died of dehydration and exhaustion. He was a true hero in every sense of the word. Only 317 men were rescued and survived.

The battle on the field, at sea and air is one form of battle but there is another battle that all of us are called to fight and that is the battle within the human heart, the battle against fear, temptation, sin and self-indulgence. It is a battle against the powers of evil, fighting instead for virtue and holiness of life. The greatest freedom in the world is not the freedom experienced between nations as necessary as that is. We are born to live freely and not in bondage. The greatest freedom is freedom in Christ, freedom from any bondage that keeps us down, keeps us from being all we are created to be. That freedom does not come from human beings, but from a relationship with Christ. We thank God this weekend for the men and women who have died fighting for our freedom and we thank the Almighty God for the great gift of His son Jesus who won the victory over sin and death and offers us the greatest freedom of all and the promise of eternal life.

Thank you to all those who served to protect our country!

God bless,
Fr. Sullivan

Fr. Sullivan, with a couple of veterans from the Waterbury Veterans Committee, Jack Shea (l) and Bob Dorr (r) in front of Fr. (Lt.) Thomas Conway memorial on our rectory’s front lawn. Photo was taken on 4 Apr 2020, day before his birthday.
Swaths of hair were falling with a gentle plunge only to take rest on a cushion of cut hair already on the floor. His hands moved across the top of her head with steady instinct as if his fingers knew what to do. This gave him the full use of his mental prowess to listen kindly to story after story being retold by the client sitting captive in the well-worn barber chair with chubby leather cushions. Pierre was known as a kind and good-natured person who was a skilled listener. This, perhaps, was the real attraction for his clients who spread word of the hair-stylist-sage who was both talented at his craft, and a trusted friend to many. Soon he became a favorite of the Manhattan socialites who paid handsome sums to sport the latest fashions of nineteenth century New York. This day was an especially successful day. The coming Christmas feast obliged many ladies and gentlemen to seek his service so they would be freshly groomed for all the parties that were compulsory to Manhattan high society. Pierre was glad to have their business and the income because his owners had plenty of debt he needed to pay. They too were socialites but fell by the hand of misfortune that doomed many families during the economic turmoil of the nineteenth century.

At closing time Pierre handed a cash box with bills protruding from under the lid and the familiar rattle of coins to the lady of the house whom he imagined to be Jesus receiving his offering as he released it, carefree, into her open palm. Pierre retired to his humble quarters in the basement of the house where it was customary for domestic slaves to take residence. The dirty lantern in the corner gave minimal light that revealed a dungeon-like room that was as depressed and hopeless as those that lived there. This was not true for Pierre, however. Yes, it was true that his slavery and those that held him as a slave were a wall that kept him from his native Haiti where his family lived and where his heart belonged. Despite the fact that he was a house slave under this somewhat prestigious family, Pierre knew the joy of the Lord in the midst of the crisis of slavery that he had no control over. Pierre responded to his dark and seemingly hopeless situation with love as he chose to support his owners with his trade when they became destitute and bankrupt. Taking pity on his captors, in order to spare them from the humiliation of falling from Manhattan society in financial collapse, they maintained the ruse of wealth while he maintained the role of a house slave even though he was the only source of income for them. It was an amazing and heroic arrangement that still leaves people speechless when they learn how Pierre remained a slave to a family he chose not only to support, but to spare from humiliation by, himself, remaining a slave. Deep within him welled up supernatural love that gave him power over the darkness and hope in the midst of a crisis. Pierre offered a blessing for his curse and a prayer when faced with hopelessness.

The tragic Covid-19 crisis, with dozens of sad consequences that it birthed, is a call to love and prayer that many have already chosen as their response to Covid-19. Like Pierre, responding with love to the crisis is the best way to get power over the crisis. People preparing food to support those in sudden need; others volunteering to help those in quarantine; and many unsung heroes that make calls to comfort those who are isolated and vulnerable are but a few of the uncelebrated and hidden acts of love that is the true medicine to cure darkness and fear.
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