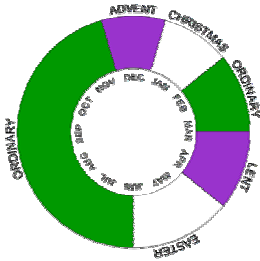


“The Canticle”



Lent / Easter 2005



Liturgical
Year
Calendar

We are in the Seasons of Lent & Easter

Repent! For the Kingdom of God is at hand...

✠ **Lent—forty days before Easter, from Ash Wednesday to Holy Thursday afternoon.**

✠ **Triduum—the great Three Days. The Triduum begins on the evening of Holy Thursday and continues until the evening of Easter Sunday**

✠ **Easter—fifty days from Easter Sunday until Pentecost**

"The Christian faith has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and left untried." — G.K. Chesterton



Secrets of The Cross Revealed!! Get Ready To Spread “The Good News!!”



By
Father Jason Worthley

“Do not be afraid; I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here: for he has been raised, just as he said.” (Matthew 28:5-6)

These words, spoken by an angel of the Lord, announce to us an essential part of our faith. Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the only Savior of the world, died on the cross, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day. The words of the angel bring to us the real Easter joy. Alleluia! Jesus Christ is risen! Death has no more power over Him.

The resurrection of Jesus is absolutely real. The one who walked on the water, who gave sight to the blind man, who cast out demons, who forgave sins, who fed the 5,000 people, and who taught with the authority of God himself, is the same one who rose from the dead. The disciples of Jesus who saw him after his resurrection saw someone that they knew very well. They spoke with the resurrected Jesus, they even ate with him. Jesus death and resurrection inspired generations of men and women to turn away from sin, to teach the Gospel, even to lay

down their lives for the true faith.

In Mel Gibson’s excellent film, *The Passion of the Christ*, not much more than one minute is devoted to the resurrection of Jesus. This should not be surprising since the Gospels do the same.



“Men of Galilee...Why do you stand gazing at the sky? The One you seek is not here. He is risen. Risen as He truly said!”

—Luke Chapter 24; Verses: 5&6

Much more is said of the Passion of Christ than is said of his resurrection. Even in our churches, the Stations of the Cross remain on the walls throughout the whole year. We might ask ourselves, “why?” The answer is simple: the only way to the glory of the resurrection is the cross.

Everyone of us has a cross to bear in this life.

For some, the cross is heavier than it is for others. This cross can be anything: sickness, loneliness, old age, betrayal and rejection, the suffering or death of a loved one.

The cross can be any kind of suffering, physical or psychological. It could be a thousand different things. But whatever the cross is, we must pick it up and follow Jesus.

By doing that, we can one day follow him into the new and real life of the resurrection, into the Kingdom of his Father and our Father.

The cross is constant in this world, but Easter shows us that it is worth it.

Why? The new life of the resurrection will make the sufferings of this life look small. This is the teaching of the Bible. In this life, the cross seems very heavy because we have to experience it. But the cross is not forever. If we follow the Good Shepherd, we shall one day experience the real and eternal joy of the resurrection. Easter should give everyone of us hope even in the most difficult of suffering.

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"Fast" Food and Feast Food —To Have & Have Not

By

Rev. Robert M. Blaney

Pastor; St. Francis Parish

There was a bowl of M&M's on the coffee table. It was Good Friday, and they shouldn't have been there. My father bought them for my mother to have for Easter, and she put them in a favorite candy dish. I was about thirteen at the time and trying to adopt a more aesthetic life. Good Friday is a day of fasting, and so eating between meals is anathema (not a good thing).

Those M&M's became an object of temptation for me throughout the whole day. But I was determined to flex my spiritual muscle and deny myself such earthly pleasures for my Lord who gave His life for me. When we returned home from Church that evening, I thought it would be OK to have some then. I justified such behavior by thinking that it had been hours since our meager meal of fish sticks and French fries and I was hungry. Also, I had "fasted" all day and Church services were over. We had sufficiently commemorated the Crucifixion. It was time to get ready for Easter. What better way than with some M&M's?

However, vanity got the better part of me, and I resisted, that is until midnight. I happened to be up late and figured if I could hold out another hour, then I could have some of the coveted pieces of chocolate heaven. And that is what I did.

Of course, I missed the point. The purpose of fasting on Good Friday, during Lent, or otherwise is not about me. This is not a practice of self-endurance. The purpose for this self-imposed discipline is to allow ourselves to be hungry for something, be it food or something else.

An awareness of longing puts us in a better disposition for God. It also brings us into solidarity with those who are forced by circumstance to "go without." We see their pictures on television or newspapers and are made conscious of their plight, but fasting connects us with them in a more profound emotional and spiritual way.

Not surprisingly, fasting leads to almsgiving, the practice of giving to the poor. As we experience greater solidarity with the poor we can't help but want to relieve even a bit of their suffering. Our offering, monetary and otherwise makes an impact.

It certainly doesn't remove people's suffering, but it makes an impact, if only a small one.

An important part of Lenten fasting, it seems to me, is the feasting that comes after.

Perhaps the reason why fasting is not in vogue is that no one knows how to feast.

If you think about it, we have so much at our disposal, that there is very little for us in the way of a treat. As kids, we craved pizza. There was a place in Quincy Square that had the best pizza. My brother and I loved it. It was a big deal for us to eat there, and only on the most solemn of occasions did we have it for dinner. It was special.

Now, there is more pizza than I could have ever desired. It's no longer special. It's not a big deal. When everything is in such abundance, what left to use for celebrations? What are the special treats out there?

One of my own spiritual practices for the past several years is to consider how I celebrate big feasts in the Church.

I try hard to plan special events in the days follow-

"...The purpose of fasting on Good Friday, during Lent, or otherwise is not about me. This is not a practice of self-endurance. The purpose for this self-imposed discipline is to allow ourselves to be hungry for something, be it food or something else."

ing Christmas and Easter: dinner with friends at a favorite restaurant, a concert, a big sundae.

You get the idea. If I do these things all the time, how do I keep certain time as sacred or special? I look forward to them and they help me to feel the joy which those special times bring.

As you think about your Lenten practices, perhaps it might be prudent to think about the Easter feast first. If you decide to abstain from chocolate for Lent, but really don't like chocolate, what kind of a sacrifice is that? But if your thing is caramel sundaes, and you plan for that to be part of your Easter celebration, then fasting from it for Lent takes on a richer meaning.

It may seem trite at first, but making such distinctions with time shapes our spiritual selves in a way which is more open to the presence of the living God.

There was a time when people dressed up for Sunday Mass. (Some still do.) They would wear their best dress or favorite tie as a way of helping to

"feast" on the Eucharist.

There was the practice of abstaining from meat on Friday and eating fish. Such practices were intended to help an individual appreciate the concepts of fasting and feasting.

While growing up, most every Sunday was marked with dinner in the dining room and the meal included biscuits. It was different than the rest of the week.

When I was serving Mass, two candles were lit on the altar for a regular Mass, four for a funeral and six for a "high" Mass. Little things like that helped me to think of the dynamics of our Catholic heritage. It was, in a sense, about fasting and feasting. Certain time is ordinary, other time is somber and other time is celebratory.

The fasting and feasting paradigm is something we strive for in our Sunday liturgies. It is reflected in the music. During Lent there is less music. There are no Alleluias or Glorias. The tone of the music is more low key. At Easter, there is much music filled with the praise of Alleluia. There are horns and bells and tympani. The tone of the music is quite uplifting. During Lent there are no flowers or decorations in the Church, while at Easter there are all kinds of flowers, banners, and candles. These examples, are about "lacking" and "having," as it were. They help to focus our attention; to create a mood which brings us more deeply into the mystery of it all.

Jesus taught his disciples that when they fast they should wash their face so that others cannot tell they are fasting. When we fast it's important not to make our fast the center of our lives or to hold it up as a badge of honor. It loses its significance when we tell everyone what we are "giving up."

Incidentally, one of the big treats that still remain is New York pizza.

Those of you from its namesake city can attest to its distinct flavor. Natives tell me it has to do with the city water. Interesting theory.

Whenever I go to New York, it's always the first meal. You needn't feel deprived of this feast, though, just because you live somewhere else. Like the song says, "If you can make it there, you can make it anywhere" or if you can't make it there and can't make it here, you can have it delivered within half an hour—Now that's a feast fast!



"The Canticle"

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Lenten “Practice” Makes Perfect—Sharpening Our Aim To Hit The Target

By

Michael Cockrell

Sin...

Webster’s defines it as an offense against religious moral law or an action that is or is felt to be highly reprehensible. It goes on to say that sin is a transgression of the law of God.

In the Encyclopedia Britannica, sin is defined as a moral evil when considered from a religious standpoint. In both Judaism and Christianity, it is regarded as the deliberate and purposeful violation of the will of God.

Looking a bit farther back in history for some additional thoughts on sin we find that in the ancient Aramaic language and culture in which Jesus taught, the terms “sin” and “evil” were archery terms.

When the archer shot at the target and missed...the scorekeeper yelled out the Aramaic word for sin. It meant that you were off the mark—take another shot.

The concept of sin was originally thought to be a source of positive mental feedback. You missed the mark...so realign and try again.

The Hebrew and Greek words which are translated as sin also mean – failing to hit the target. Hmm... when you become conscious and aware of your inaccuracy you have the option to reconsider and try again. And by the way...where the arrow fell when it missed the target was, in Aramaic, referred to as evil.

The parallels are too numerous and enthralling to ignore...Sin “nailed” the human race to The Cross in the person of Jesus Christ who “became sin” and died so that we may have eternal life; so that when we sin and “miss the mark” we get another shot at the target.

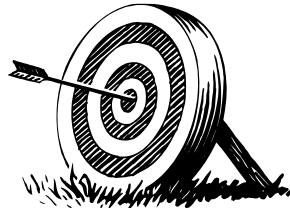
That target is God in the person of Jesus Christ crucified, who invited Thomas who, in essence, missed the mark, in his disbelief of Christ’s victory over sin via His Resurrection, was invited to examine or probe, as some translations have it, the “marks” that evened the score in our favor that those sins

prevented us from experiencing.

Lent is the season where repentance and redemption meet and are realigned and reaffirmed for the reparation of the human condition.

We are invited to take a closer look, to examine and be sorry for the pains we inflict upon ourselves and others and to be ultimately and eternally grateful that someone else has known our pain in a tangible way and has sought of His own free will to endure supreme suffering and sacrifice unto death, so that we may be spared from its ultimate and eternal consequences.

To get another shot at the target, as it were.



But getting another shot at the target is in itself not enough. Other factors which are equally important also come into play...

We need to know where and what the target is and what adjustments we need to make with each shot that will get us ever closer to the center of our goal.

In other words, we need to practice! For us Catholics, that means practicing our faith.

Practicing and practicing over and over again until, at last, we finally get it right and hit the target—eternal happiness with God in Heaven.

In a very personal way this notion of “practicing,” especially, keeps “cropping up” for me during this season of Lent. And I doubt it is accidental...

I was once approached by a student, who commented that I had struck her as being very knowledgeable and devout in terms of my Catholic faith and further asked how I was able to talk about that faith so zealously for a man my age? This, in part, is what I told her...

“If you’re still with me to this point, and I hope you are, I’ve said all this to persuade you, with all the skill with which God has gifted me, that my presence on Earth may

have been allowed to continue so that on this day, I would meet with you, and with only your human understanding and expressed sense of personal unworthiness for meriting Heaven, I would be able to comfort you in the knowledge that it matters not whether we have succeeded in this life that God loves us, it matters only that we have tried to succeed for God, because we LOVE Him; who is in all of us and who LOVES US UNCONDITIONALLY; so much so that He sent His only Son to die so that we may have Eternal Life!

Show your appreciation of His sacrifice for you, by making the most of every opportunity on Earth to reflect to others what the Kingdom of God looks like when they look at you...

As for how I continue to practice God’s plan in my life, Your question itself is my answer to you, which is...I continue to practice!

To be accomplished at anything requires practice, whether its winning a race, playing a sonata, writing a poem, or becoming more like Christ... it all takes practice...and a fair amount of that quality called “zeal” because, unless you are passionate about pursuing and achieving that which you undertake, you will never give your all; you won’t feel that intensity and meaning, for we get out of life what we put into it.

I am still ‘perfecting’ myself, so if I strike you as a very zealous man, then perhaps I’m on my way and thank God that He is becoming more recognizable in me, but as the poet says, ‘with miles to go before I sleep,’ I still have work to do.

My job on Earth is not yet finished... neither is yours.

God allows us here drawing breath until He is satisfied we don’t need any more practice and that we’ve finally gotten it right enough to move on.

Remember, too, that even Jesus was tempted by Satan and even He fell three times on His way to saving the entire world!”

Above all, Christ practiced what He preached ... and practice makes perfect!



Saints' Corner



Saint Patrick

March 17th

St. Patrick was born in Scotland in the fourth century. At 15 he committed a fault, which appears not to have been a crime, yet was to him a subject of tears during the remainder of his life. In his 16th year he was carried in captivity into Ireland where he was made to keep cattle on the mountains in hunger and nakedness. He carried his cross with patience, resignation and holy joy. After 6 months he received a message from God in a dream to return home. God manifested to him in visions that he be destined to convert Ireland. Forsaking his family and birthright, St. Patrick consecrated his soul to God. Such were the fruits of his labors that he consecrated an infinite number of people to God. St. Patrick used the shamrock to describe the concept of the Blessed Trinity. St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. He is also the patron saint of Boston.



Saint Joseph

March 19th

St. Joseph was lineally descended from great kings of the tribe of Judah, but his true glory consisted in his humility and virtue. God entrusted him with the education of his divine Son. He was given Mary, to be the protector of her chastity, to secure her from calumnies in the birth of the Son of God, and to assist her in her journeys, fatigues and persecutions. We are indebted to Joseph for the preservation of the infant Jesus from Herod's jealousy. St. Joseph being a strict observer of the Mosaic Law, annually repaired to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Noted for his willingness to immediately get up and do what God told him. He carried out his vocation with complete fidelity until God called him saying "Good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord." St. Joseph is the patron saint of workers, doubt and hesitation.



Saint Catherine of Siena

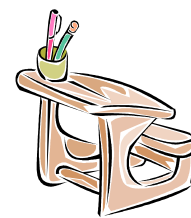
April 29th

St. Catherine was born at Siena in 1347. She withdrew very young to a solitude a little way out of town to imitate the lives of the fathers of the desert. In her childhood she consecrated her virginity to God by a private vow. At 12 years of age, her parents thought to engage her in a married state. Catherine redoubled her prayers that she might keep her vow. At the age of 18 she entered the order of St. Dominic. For three years she never spoke to any one but God and her confessor. A pestilence laying waste the country in 1374, Catherine devoted herself to serve the infected and obtained the cure of several. In her short 33 years of life, St. Catherine left us, in addition to her life as an example, six treatises, a discourse on the Annunciation and 364 letters. St. Catherine is the patron saint of Nurses, illness and temptation.



Kathy's Column

Kathy Long
Director of Religious Education &
Pastoral Associate



First of all, I want to thank you good people of our parish for your enthusiastic response and attendance at our Generations of Faith festivals!

For nearly a year now, Teddy Paczkowski, Colleen Judge, and Pamela Lupien, joined by Gigi Hovanec, and Maryanne Gauthier, have been meeting with Father Bob and me to plan this program.

We are encouraged and gratified by your participation and willingness to help us "iron out" the kinks.

We work carefully to make each faith festival different and plan varied activities so that each individual who attends is sure to enjoy and connect with some part of the day.

As I write this, I am attending a conference on Whole Family Catechesis in Washington, D.C.

There are over two thousand catechetical leaders and priests in attendance with every state in the U.S. represented including Alaska and Hawaii, as well as some European and Caribbean nations.

There is a great excitement about this new way of coming together as a vibrant and faith-filled parish community.

My well is overflowing with ideas you'll hear about in the future. And of course I

will appreciate and welcome all ideas you may have as to how we might improve our faith festivals at St. Francis.

Be sure and let Father Bob, a team member or me know what you like about our program, as well as those areas you think need our attention. Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!



I want to remind everyone about Vacation Bible School which will take place July 11th to July 15th from 9 a.m. until noon.

We will be "traveling" the Serengeti of Africa to learn more about God and His awesome love for us. Registration forms for this "Serengeti Safari" are available now in the Parish office.

Since space limits us to eighty (80) children, it is important that you register early to reserve your spot!

And while you're at it, if you can help as a teacher, decorator, or counselor, you can let us know that at the same time you come in to pick up your registration forms!



Prior registration is also necessary for our next "Generations of Faith" event to be held on consecutive dates (Palm Sunday or Good Friday) in remembrance of

the Passion of Jesus, so that we can plan appropriately for the meal on these dates.

The Palm Sunday session will be held following the Vigil Mass on Saturday at 4:00 p.m. and after the 11:30 a.m. Mass on Palm Sunday and then again on Good Friday from 12 -2 p.m.

See you Palm Sunday!

Peace and blessings,
 Kathy

Visit our new Parish Reading Center!



Many great Catholic pamphlets and periodicals to peruse. If you see something you like, you may purchase it and take it home. Samples include "Catholic Digest," "Marriage," "America," "National Catholic Report."

The Reading Center is located downstairs in the Parish Hall.

✠ From the Pastor ✠

The Parish Pastoral Council is putting together an assessment of the parish and will be asking parishioners to participate in a survey.

During March, surveys will be available at all Masses. They take about 10 minutes to complete and will be of tremendous help to the council in assessing the overall quality of parish life.

Additionally, beginning in April, a certain number of parishioners will be asked to participate in a 10 minute interview with a member of the parish council.

The interviews will give the council members greater insight into the overall responses of the surveys.

Your participation in completing the survey is encouraged and appreciated.

—Father Bob

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 2005						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
6 .	7 K-8 Classes Bereavement Support Group 7:00pm	8	9 Ash Wednesday	10 →	11	12
13 10th G. Confirm.	14 K-8 Classes Evening Prayer 7:00pm	15 2nd Grade Reconciliation 6:00pm to 7:00pm <u>Sin Summit</u>	16 2nd Grade Reconciliation 6:00pm to 7:00pm	17 →	18 Stations of the Cross 9:30am	19
20 School Vacation	21 Evening Prayer 7:00pm	22 <u>Sin Summit</u> 7:00pm	23 Scripture Study 9:30-11:00 Reconciliation 6:00pm	24	25 Stations of the Cross 9:30am	26 Blood Drive 9:00am-2:00pm Pot Luck Dinner 5:00pm
27	28 K-8 Classes Evening Prayer 7:00pm 2nd Grade			→		

MARCH 2005						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 K-8 Classes <u>Sin Summit</u> 7:00pm	2 Scripture Study 9:30-11:00am Reconciliation 6:00pm	3 →	4 Stations of the Cross 9:30am	5 8th Grade Retreat 9:00am-2:30
6 Pam Stenzel St. Louis Church 7:00pm 9 & 10 Grade 7 & 8 w/parents	7 K-8 Classes Evening Prayer 7:00pm Bereavement Group 7:00pm	8	9 Scripture Study 9:30-11:00am Reconciliation 6:00pm	10 →	11 Stations of the Cross 9:30a Hunger Banquet	12 7th Grade Retreat 9:00am-2:30
13 9th G. Confirm.	14 K-8 Classes Final Wk Evening Prayer 7:00pm	15	16 Scripture Study 9:30-11:00 Reconciliation 6:00pm	17 St. Patrick's Day Party 7:00pm	18 Stations of the Cross 9:30am	19 GOF Passion of Our Lord 4:00pm/7:00pm
20 GOF Palm Sunday- Passion of Our Lord 10:00—1:00pm Concert 3:00pm Mass-8, 10, 11:45	21 Evening Prayer 7:00pm Bereavement Support Group 7:00pm	22 Chrism Mass	23 Scripture Study 9:30-11:00am Reconciliation 6:00pm	24 Holy Thursday Prayer Service/ Benediction 7:30pm	25 GOF Good Friday Passion of Our Lord 12:00pm-2:00pm Liturgy 7:30pm	26 Holy Saturday Easter Vigil 7:30pm Alleluia Party 9:00pm
27 Easter Mass- 8:00, 10:00 and 11:45	28	29	30 Scripture Study 9:30-11:00am	31		

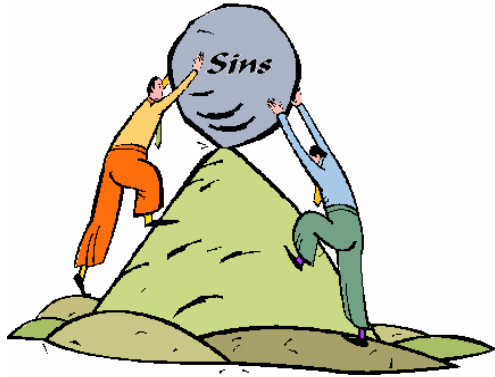
CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SCHEDULE

APRIL 2005						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2 Change your Clocks (1 Hr. Ahead)
3 9th Gr. Confirm. Divine Mercy Mass 2:30pm	4 Bereavement Support Group 7:00pm	5	6	7	8	9 2nd Grade Retreat Parent and Child
10 9th G. Confirm.	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18 Bereavement Support Group	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 First Communion Rehearsal 6:00-7:00	29 Scholarship Applications Due	30 First Communion 11:00am

MAY 2005						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Catechist Retreat 4:00pm-8:00pm	2 Bereavement Support Group 7:00pm	3	4 First Communion. Rehearsal	5	6	7 First Communion 11:00am
8	9	10	11	12	13 Wine Tasting Party 7:00pm	14 10th grade retreat 8:00am-6:30pm
15	16 Bereavement Support Group 7:00pm	17	18	19	20	21
22 GOF Trinity 10:00am-1:30pm	23	24	25	26 GOF Trinity 5:30pm-7:30pm	27	28
29	30 Memorial Day	31				



St. Francis Parish
“Quick – Look” Events List



Are you struggling under the weight of your sins?...

Then, come to the “Saint Francis Sin Summit” and discover what you can do to lay down your burdens! (all sessions begin at 7:00pm)

February 15... Sin and Grace

February 22... Forgiveness

March 1... Reconciliation

Lenten Observance Calendar

Mondays

9:30 – 6:30pm – Euch. Adoration

7:00pm – Evening Prayer with a Spiritual Conference

Feb. 14 – Sr. Leonore Coan, SND

Feb. 21 – Mrs. Kathleen Long

Feb. 28 – Fr. Bob Bergeron

March 7 – Mrs. Jackie Regan

March 14 – Fr. John McDonough

March 21 – Judge Timothy Sullivan

Wednesdays

6:00pm – Reconciliation

Fridays

9:30am – Stations of the Cross

Saturdays

9:30AM – Reconciliation

Easter Triduum

Holy Thursday

9:00am – Morning Prayer

7:30pm – Mass of the Lord’s Supper

Followed by Adoration until midnight.

Good Friday

9:00am – Morning Prayer

9:30am – Stations of the Cross

12:00pm – GOF - The Lord’s Passion

7:30pm – Liturgy / The Lord’s Passion

Holy Saturday

7:30pm – Easter Vigil

9:00pm – Alleluia Party (Following Mass)

“Generations of Faith”

Events We’ll Celebrate As A Community...

✠ **Passion of Our Lord**
March 19, 20
and 25th

✠ **Trinity Sunday**
May 22 and 26



The 11:30 a.m. Mass times on Palm Sunday & Easter have been changed to 11:45 p.m.

St. Patrick’s Day Party

March 17th

(You don’t want to miss this event!!)

**Tickets available
In the Parish
Office**



Pam Stenzel

Is coming to tell you...

“Sex Has A Price Tag!”

March 6th at 7:00pm

St. Louis Church

All Confirmation students must attend! (Even bring a friend!)

7th & 8th Grade students may attend with their parents!

Coming Together to Nourish Body and Soul

GOF Event - "The Baptism Of Our Lord"

By
Michael Cockrell

The feast of "The Baptism of The Lord" commemorates and reminds us yet again that we are included as part of a larger community composed of believers in the promise of Resurrection to new life through our own baptism whether it be here at St. Francis or elsewhere. Our Baptism like the Baptism of Jesus, names us as belonging to God as He created us and yet changes us; makes us a new creature washed free of the stain of Original Sin inherited through Adam and Eve.

In being cleansed of that sin through our own baptism we are made like Christ in that we die to sin and through Him arise to new life. Through Baptism we are restored and our souls refreshed and nourished with God's grace for the journey of life that lay ahead.

On that journey, God knows our needs, whether spiritual or physical and has seen fit to provide for them.



Of course, Jesus knew the value of such provisions, as well, and made a point of attending first to the physical needs of those who embarked on the journey of faith and service to each other and then to the spiritual needs He sensed in them. To



Him, our needs for nourishment whether physical or spiritual, carried equal weight.

In Jesus' time, as now, the recognition and fulfillment of those needs were what made Jesus' ministry so personal and effective and its importance so paramount that here, at St. Francis, the parish came together as a community of believers to honor and emulate Christ's mission; welcoming new believers through reception of the sacrament of Baptism and thereafter celebrating that initiation through the sharing of a meal of pizza to nourish their physical needs as well.

There was something for everyone at this GOF event. All ages participated in a game called, "What's My Name?" The mission—to name characters from The

Bible who had something to do with the Baptism of Jesus. (Need a hint? John The Baptist, Elizabeth, and King Herod, to name a few.

The Confirmation students used their lessons on the symbols of Baptism to help the children make Baptism water globes.

While the children were engaged in making cards to send to the soldiers fighting in Iraq, the adults were engaged and inspired by a talk about salvation and how the sacrament of Baptism is integral to that salvation. It was so important to our salvation that in allowing John The Baptist to baptize Jesus, He allowed The Triune God to be revealed and defined the importance of our human cooperation and participation in God's saving work.

It is life-giving water that first cleanses us of Original Sin and the last drop of the "water of life" flowing from Calvary where Jesus declared of His task, "It is finished!"



Traditions of Our Faith... "The Blessed Trinity"

The Blessed Trinity, though perhaps difficult to fully understand by the human intellect, is one of the fundamental catechetical truths of the believing, faithful Catholic. We accept the fact, as revealed in the sacred scripture and more concretely at Christ's baptism, that Jesus was the second person of The Blessed Trinity co-equal in power and majesty with God, The Father and God, The Holy Spirit





Views From The Pews: “What Are You Doing For Lent?”

“We are breaking with our format of offering a single viewpoint column from a parishioner for this issue and instead have solicited several parishioners’ responses to the question:

‘What are you doing for Lent?’

Those responses appear below and we are grateful for their insights... Some responses have been edited for space considerations.” —The Editors.



“Lent is a time of conversion – a turning away from sin and turning toward God. I try to keep this foremost in my mind during this Church season. During Lent I try to spend more time in the presence of God in the Eucharist. I take advantage of the 6:30am daily Mass here at St. Francis, and try to go to one or more daily Masses during the week. This allows me to draw closer to God, and to bring that sense of Spirituality out into my daily life. It strengthens and nourishes me.

I also try to attend some of the prayer and learning opportunities offered here at church. I look forward to taking the time to slow down, and to deepen my faith through learning and prayer. In addition to fasting and almsgiving, spending more time deepening my faith with prayer and the Eucharist helps me to continue my conversion process.”

—Sharon Smart



“During Lent, I usually focus on the intangibles when it comes to “giving up” something. I look for the ways that I’ve failed to love throughout the year and then work at trying to correct those negative patterns and deeds.”

—Allen Decker



“I am fasting between meals every day. I am praying more with a focus on showing compassion toward everyone and being kind to others. I also choose this time to read something inspirational. I took advantage of the reading center in the parish hall this year.”

—Paulette Burke



“This time of year more than ever, has me focused on how I spend my time and energy. Life has a way of taking you along and it is easy to give up control to its demands. This Lenten season I am trying to incorporate little things into my day that will help me keep the season Holy. Offering a prayer or a rosary to those who are struggling to find their faith. Stopping whatever I am doing at 3:00 pm to say the Divine Mercy prayer. Trying to attend a Mass on a weekday. I will also try to take part in as many events as possible that St. Francis offers every week. I like sharing these events with so many friends and family!”

—Mickey Cockrell



I am inspired by a book I’m reading. I am reading more spiritually focused books so that I might become closer to God and live my life accordingly.

—Jim Long



Lent offers me an opportunity to strengthen my relationship with God and our savior Jesus. I get closer to God by pressing into action a few basic principles of our Catholic Faith, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, confession and receiving Jesus

through the Holy Eucharist.

I pray the Rosary everyday and then ask God to direct my thoughts and my sub-conscious to reveal his will for me. Praying daily through the good times will maintain my faith foundation that will allow me to get through the difficult times we all encounter as we travel down the road of life In addition to prayer I read something from scripture everyday during Lent. I fast on Wednesday and Friday. I try to perform acts of almsgiving or kindness everyday. I keep any act of kindness to myself and I find the reward of this comes back to me tenfold. I go to at least one weekly Mass and got to confession once a month.

—Jim Pearson



“I am working on consciously forgiving someone who has hurt me and asking that person for forgiveness.”

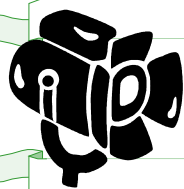
—Kathy Long



Coming from a woman’s viewpoint of spring cleaning, I am using this concept as I approach my Lenten commitment. When I open drawers and open closets, it is like opening the house of my soul. As I look in, I can see what’s piled up in there that I don’t need. What is used or worn that I can give away? What can I share; what do I need to keep? As I do this extended cleaning, it reminds me to keep myself clean and prepare for Easter. So my sacrifice is not so much about giving up as it is about healing, for myself and others that I love.

—Louise Daigle

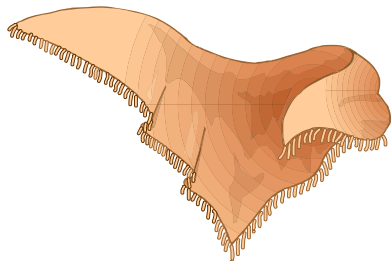




SPOTLIGHT ON SOME OF OUR MINISTRIES...

Prayer Shawl Ministry

The Prayer Shawl Ministry, which officially began in December, has been a great success. We currently have 45 shawls ready to share with those in need! We want to thank everyone who took the time and prayers to participate in this important healing ministry. You really have shown the true spirit of community at work, here at St. Francis.



In the next few weeks, we will have a “Blessing of the Shawls” service.

If you know of anyone who can benefit from these shawls, please let me know so that we can give them one.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry is an ongoing ministry. If you would like to start knitting or crocheting a shawl we can help you get started. If you

have already made one, perhaps you would consider another. We have also received donations of yarn and can supply you with the materials. Please call Louise Daigle at (978) 454-7970

Bereavement Ministry

Our Bereavement support group meets every first and third Monday of each month at 7:00p.m. (except Holidays).

Healing is hastened when grief is shared. The ministry is available to you on a drop in basis. Take a step and join us...you’ll be glad you did!

S.M.A.R.T. Ministry

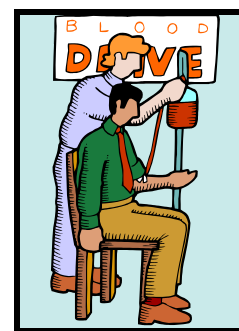
Supporting mothers and raising toddlers is a ministry focused on providing support for families with small children. The “Mom & Tot” drop-in meets every Wednesday from 9:30 to 11:00am. Bring your baby, toddler or preschooler for an opportunity to meet other children and their families. Music, puppets, crafts and community are just a few things you will experience with your children. It’s a great time to bring a little levity into a busy day. For more

information, call Jessica Smith or the office and take advantage of the excitement now!!

Nursing Ministry

Want to participate in a life-saving Blood Drive or learn CPR?

Need your blood pressure checked or have a dietary question? Have a concern you want to discuss?



The blood drive will be held on February 26th in the parish hall.

The Saint Francis Parish Nurses are available to provide these services and others, including patient advocacy and referral every Monday from 9:30am-12:00pm and 6:00pm - 8:00pm as well as Saturday morning from 9:30am-11:00pm.

Become a Part of Something Special...

- ★ Altar Servers
- ★ Altar Society
- ★ Art & Environment
- ★ Bereavement
- ★ Building Commission
- ★ Christian Services
- ★ Coffee & Donuts
- ★ Finance Council
- ★ Cribbage League
- ★ Eucharistic Ministers
- ★ Evangelization
- ★ Lectors
- ★ Friendly Visitors
- ★ Fundraising
- ★ Golfing Tourney
- ★ Prayer Line
- ★ Music Ministry
- ★ Nursing Ministry
- ★ Pastoral Council
- ★ Ushers & Greeters
- ★ Religious Education
- ★ Respect Life
- ★ Spiritual Development
- ★ Prayer Shawl Ministry
- ★ Welcoming Ministry
- ★ Widow/Widowers
- ★ Youth Group



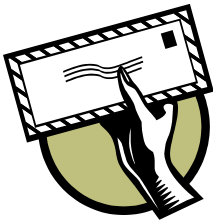
Join a Committee at St. Francis and be a rising STAR !

A WARM WELCOME AWAITS!!

You are cordially invited to join in the St. Francis "Faith Experience!"

If you'd like to nourish your Catholic roots or reacquaint yourself with real heroes and noble struggles by faithful followers of the traditions of our Catholic faith.....Then join us on the journey here at St. Francis!!

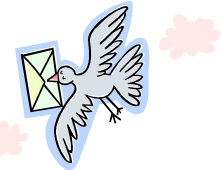
If you are searching for answers and assurance to cope with life's challenges, we offer comfort in sorrow, support in need and camaraderie in celebration. There is something for everyone and many events to participate in. Take a look inside for a sampling of what's waiting for you!!



We are guided by the words of our patron, St. Francis of Assisi...

"We shall pass this way but once, therefore any good that we may do, any kindness that we may show, let us do it now. Let us not defer it nor neglect it, for we shall not pass this way again!"

St. Francis Parish welcomes you!



St. Francis Parish

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