

On Eagle's Wings

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church
March / April 2017



From the Pastor

We are entering the Lenten season. It's time for ashes on our foreheads. It's time for not eating meat on Fridays, and it is a time to find something to give up for Lent. Many will make time to do something charitable for others. Perhaps, some will make more time for prayer or studying scriptures. It is a time for going to the stations on Tuesday nights and, of course, attending the Fish Fry on Friday nights. And one thing that should be on every one's list of things to do is our Parish Lenten Mission, which happens March 13 -15.

Lent is a time for penance, a time to clean house of those troubling things that keep us from a better relationship with God. It is a time to reflect on what is working in our relationship with God. If you think that everything is just fine, then I would challenge you to take a deeper look at your life. We tend to get too comfortable, and sometimes we fall into the false notion that we are finished growing spiritually. Our routine can easily become thoughtless, and there is a good chance that apathy will set in as well. So if that is the case, then it is time to shake things up. Just because we have done the same thing over and over again doesn't mean that we should keep doing it. If it has lost its punch or its effect, it is time to adjust. What is the most effective thing we can do to make this season of Lent meaningful?

Too often, we look ahead to what comes after Lent. While it is great to have our eyes fixed to the resurrection, we can't get there until we get to the cross. It's not surprising that we would rather skip

the pain and suffering and go right to the glorious moment of Jesus rising from the dead. But if we do that, we miss how much Jesus loves us. He chose to die for our sins...we have to recognize him in all of his pain on the cross. This is the moment we are reminded of every time we celebrate the Eucharist. I still think the Eucharist is too available to us, and I believe it can be taken for granted.

Each Lent, we are called to walk with Jesus to Jerusalem and join in the Last Supper. We are called to journey with him and his disciples into the garden, and we are called to witness his closest friends running away after his arrest. Let us walk with him on the journey to the cross on Calvary. Can we feel the pain of Mary as she cradled her lifeless son in her arms? Naturally, we all want to be at the empty tomb. But why? Does it actually mean something to us? If we can't make some effort to walk with Jesus in this sacred time, how can the end hold value to us? Of course, the church is full at Easter with standing room only. Where will the majority of people be the following week? Find ways this season to prepare for what Easter represents. But please, don't avoid walking to Calvary to the cross where the Savior of the World hung for all to see. Shake things up so the Easter season looks different. God has called us each by name; are we ready to take the journey? I am; will you join me? See you in church!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fr. West'.

Father Don West
Pastor

From the Business Manager



Our parish finances are currently in good shape. At the end of January, our donation income was \$885k versus a budget of \$872k (1.5% ahead of budget). Our expenses were at \$834k versus a budget of \$972k (nearly 14% under budget). Thank you to everyone who gives to our parish. We would not be able to do all that we do without you. Your parish staff continues to watch all of our expenses.

Update on 1F1H1L Fundraiser: During 2015, our parish participated in an Archdiocesan-wide fundraising campaign called "One Faith, One Hope, One Love". Our parish made pledges totaling \$1,313,900 for the five year period of the campaign. During the 2015 calendar year, \$312,318 was collected on these pledges by the 1F1H1L campaign. In 2016, another \$231,047 was collected. This means, at the end of year two, we have paid in 41% of our total pledges. As many of you know, 20% of all collected pledges are returned to the parish. Our parish decided that 75% of our money from the campaign would go to building improvements and the remaining 25% would go to our four designated charities (Reach Out Lakota, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Leo the Great parish and Campton Mission). Thanks to those who have been making payments on their pledges, we have been able to utilize our portion of the donations towards new siding on our Spirit House and updated handicap-accessible restrooms in the Pavilion. Most importantly, the Catholic Community Foundation (CCF) has started utilizing their 1F1H1L funds for scholarships to students in Catholic grade schools and high schools for this coming school year. If you have any questions about the campaign or the CCF, please contact Michael Vanderburgh, secretary and director of the Catholic Community Foundation, by phone at 513-257-6266, ext. 2882; or by email at Michael.Vanderburgh@1faith1hope1love.org. Thank you to all who have given or pledged to the One Faith, One Hope, One Love campaign.

An important part of our parish life is our wonderful Family Festival. This year's festival will be on August 4-5-6, so mark your calendars! We are looking for a few key positions to be filled on our festival committee this year. These positions will work with current committee members, so lots of coaching and assistance will be provided. We need the following positions to be filled: Security Chair, Kitchen Chair. Please call or e-mail me if you are interested in one of these positions at 777-6433 (ext. 124) or jseibenick@stjohnwc.org. This is a great way to give back to our parish community and the friendships created while working on our festival will last you a lifetime.

In this time of Lent, make sure that you are spending time giving back to your community and spreading as much kindness as possible! I hope to see you at the parish mission on March 13-14-15! God bless each of you; you are a gift to our parish.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joan", written in a cursive style.

Joan Seibenick
Business Manager

Ash Wednesday - An article from the Worship Commission

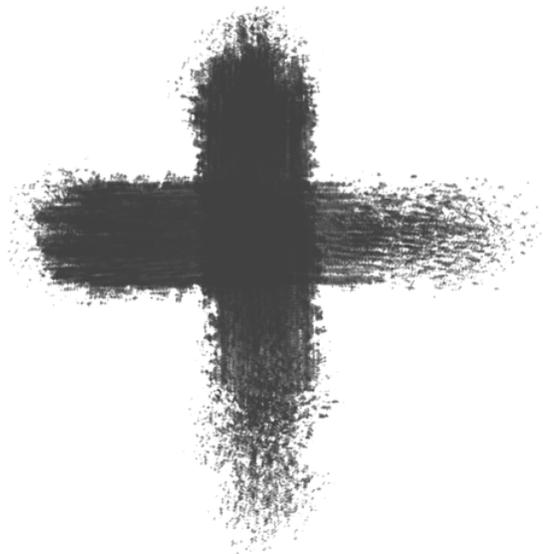
By John Dorger

As we go about our everyday lives, we can find that there are very few visible symbols that identify a person as a Christian. One of them, though, is the receiving of ashes on the forehead, usually in the form of a cross, on Ash Wednesday.

In ancient times, both pre-Christian and early Christian, the wearing of ashes was commonly used to express grief and sorrow for sins and other moral failings. In modern times, the wearing of ashes on Ash Wednesday, often accompanied by the practice of partial fasting and a day without eating meat, is used to remind us of the ultimate sacrifice Jesus made for us.

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent in Western Christianity, a six week period of fasting, personal reflection and atonement in preparation of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday. The three purposes of lent are: Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving. Lent originated as a mirroring of the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the desert where, according to the canonical gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, he endured temptation by Satan. Ash Wednesday derives its name from the practice of blessing ashes made from palm branches blessed on the previous Palm Sunday and placing them on the foreheads of participants usually with the accompaniment, "Repent and believe in the Gospel", or "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return". The latter is based on words spoken to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:19, reminding participants of their sinfulness and mortality and, thus, their need to repent.

We should wear our ashes with great humility as well as great joy, for ashes are a visible reminder of our humanity, and of our frequent failings. But they also reminds us of the sacrifice of Jesus and His promise that eternal salvation can be ours.



Turn away from sin and be
FAITHFUL *to the Gospel.*

Breath of God

It was late at night, and we still had 30 more minutes until we reached home. Usually this seems like a short amount of time, but with a screaming baby in the car this can seem like eternity. Luckily, my husband was driving, but I was frantic in the back seat trying every distraction I could think of: a favorite stuffed toy...nope; rattle...nope; peek-a-boo...nope. Nothing was working; the fuss faucets were running full blast! Finally I tried my last resort by gently blowing in my daughter's face.

At first this caused a moment's delay of crying, as she was surprised by the change. But as I continued to blow cool air, she reached out her little hand towards me in a certain amount of wonderment. She stopped crying and started gazing out the window, watching the moon; this, and the motion of the car gently rocked her to sleep. A sense of peace spread over the whole car for the last 25 minutes of the drive home. Seeing my daughter's reaction caused me to stop for a moment, and I recalled a Bible passage that had always puzzled me.

After his resurrection, Jesus appears to his disciples in a locked room and shows them his hands and side. He begins by saying "Peace be with you" and then he continues "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." Okay, all fine and good up to this point (other than the fact that Jesus had just walked through the wall), but I think that overall the disciples were overjoyed to see Jesus! But then he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." (John 20: 22-23)

Wait a minute...he breathed on them? Yes, I see the obvious connection with the Holy Spirit, that is promised to the disciples that they receive in a "great wind" that appears to them at Pentecost (Acts 2). Yes, I know about how God breathed life into Adam in the beginning (Genesis 2:7). But really, it's the first time that Jesus sees his close group of friends and disciples after he has risen from the dead, and he breathes on them. Gross! Luckily for the disciples, I am sure that the Son of God didn't have bad breath! But after seeing my daughter in the car, I realized something more. Here were the disciples, in a panic and afraid since their great teacher was dead. They were lost and confused. They didn't know where to turn or where to go. They had locked themselves in a room, away from the authorities, away from observers and mockers. Some of them had probably been crying (though not as loudly as my daughter...) Through Jesus breathing on them, they were able to calm down and really understand their new task- to forgive sins and to go out and spread the Good News that Jesus taught. Sometimes all we need is a gentle reminder like this to help us remember that God is with us and to be at peace.



Anna Peloquin
Pastoral Associate of Children's Faith Formation

Festival Committee Works Hard Year-Round

This year's parish festival will be on August 4-5-6. However, before that weekend happens, our Festival Committee spends time on so many important decisions. We decide on the layout, games, food and beverages. We configure electrical lines, order prizes, and determine how many booths and tents and grills we need. We advertise, set up a volunteer website, go shopping for baskets and find sponsors and donors. The list is pretty endless. Luckily, we also have a team of 20-25 people who make this all happen as seamlessly as possible. Some of the people on the team have been around longer than we can remember (thanks, Hank, Ron, Dick and Dan). Others have been around for just a year (thanks, Steven). All of these people are amazing. Even if they started out not knowing a thing about a festival, they can now quote you pricing on sponsorships or tell you how many people it takes to run a shift at the poker booth. It is the true definition of a team with spirit like no other. I am honored and privileged to work side by side with this group.

As many of you know, when you give your time and talent, the rewards that you receive are greater than the time and energy that you give. And, as exhausted as we are on Sunday night at 10 p.m. on the first full weekend in August, we get up and do it again each year. Why? Because we love it, and also because we know how much it means to our parish. A full 10% of our parish income comes from these three days each August. Over the past three years, we have averaged over \$165,000 in net income from our festival. That is an amazing feat accomplished by an even more amazing team of people.

If you are interested in serving on our festival committee, we do have two positions open this year: kitchen manager and security manager. Please contact me if you are interested in either of these positions (jseibenick@stjohnwc.org).

I want to take a moment to truly thank the Festival Committee, past and present! If you have ever served on the Committee, thank you! The 2017 Festival Committee Members are: Diane Biehle, Matt Bolton, Dan Brankamp, Kathy Butler, Gary Eiser, Gary Era, Jeremy Fauber, Jared Fiehrer, Sharon Hall, Ara Hookom, Hank Korb, Judy Lenihan, Brigid Loebig, Ron Porter, Angela Pugliano, Janet Raters, Steven Raters, Lee Risser, Kirt Robb, Dick Shoemaker, Anita Turpin and Lisa Wolff. If you see any of these wonderful people around, please thank them!



Joan Seibenick
Business Manager

Update from St. Gabriel Consolidated School

By: Nicole Brainard, Principal



Saint Gabriel

This past month has been filled with excitement at St. Gabriel Consolidated School. We have had a wonderful celebration of Catholic Schools Week, including a very well-attended Open House, and our eighth grade students have amassed a staggering \$411,700 in scholarships to the local private and parochial high schools as a result of their outstanding performance on the High School Placement Test. I encourage you to take a look at our new website at www.stgabeschool.org and see how we continue to celebrate 150 years of educating children in the Catholic tradition.

In addition to these successes, our brand new VEX IQ Robotics Teams, composed of children in grades 5-8 participated in their first-ever competition in Marion, Ohio. Four out of the five teams that participated went to the finals and one team won the entire competition and has earned a berth in the State VEX IQ Robotics Competition. We could not be more thrilled at the success of these 18 children and their wonderful coaches and we look forward to many more successes from this program in the future.

As we approach the Lenten and Easter seasons of the Church year, the children at St. Gabriel Consolidated School are working and learning about the importance of Jesus' sacrifice of Himself for us. Looking at these seasons through the lens of discipleship, as a school, we are encouraging service for others through activities within the religion curriculum and those within our wider community. As has been our tradition here at St. Gabriel, the children will participate in the Living Stations of the Cross on Holy Thursday and experience a Lenten Communal Penance Service before we leave school for Easter Break. We have many blessings at St. Gabriel Consolidated School, but first and foremost, our greatest blessing is the gift of sharing the faith within our classrooms and with one another.

Slowing Down During Lent

A few years ago, I attended a class on organ improvisation – the art of spontaneously making music at the instrument. The instructor pointed out during the class that some congregations in Holland sing chorales at a very slow pace. The pace was so slow that people would have to breathe after every one or two notes! They would use music as an exercise in *lectio divina*, meditating on each word as it is sung. The instructor took that method of singing, and taught students how to make beautiful pieces of music by interweaving melodies with tunes played very slowly.

Lent is frequently translated as ‘springtime’. However, in another language it has still another meaning: lent is the French word for “slow”. The pace of life in the modern world is inarguably hectic. We move from commitment to commitment, assignment to assignment, party to party and many of us leave little time to eat or sleep, much less pray.

During this season of Lent, I invite you to slow down. Breathe, Eat slowly, Meditate. Think on the words of Scripture. Quietly reflect on the music we sing in church – phrase by phrase, note by note. During Lent, we will be singing music that is slower and more contemplative by nature. Take the opportunity to use music as a means to slow down and sit at the feet of the Lord, listening to his Good News.

God bless you all during this Lenten season.



Michael Dailey
Pastoral Associate of Music Ministry

Using the Darkness to Appreciate the Light

Fr. Don mentioned in his article that we need to experience Lent for what it is; a time of deep introspection and reflection on the cross. Without Jesus' ultimate sacrifice, we would not have Easter Sunday to look forward to. I'd like to remind everyone, as well as myself, to take a look at this topic a little more deeply.

One thing that I always try to remember when I am in a funk is that we cannot appreciate the good without the bad. If we did not have any hard times, how could we recognize when things are good? We should try to use our struggles as learning experiences for the brighter times ahead. Reflect on Jesus' own time of darkness and his sacrifice when you are wanting to forget about your own. After the darkness comes the light.

While we may use Lent as a time of preparation for what's to come, let's remember to also live in the moment and reflect on ourselves. How can we use our struggles to be better family members, spouses, friends, and coworkers? Jesus died on the cross so that we may all have eternal life. Let's focus on making our own sacrifices so that we may increase our chances at that promise of eternal life.



Angela Pugliano
Pastoral Associate of
Communications

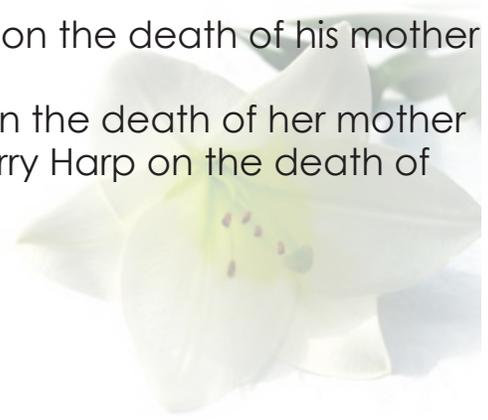
Our Prayers and Sympathy go out to...

December

- Ginny Shawver on the death of her father
- Linda Heglin on the death of her father
- Shirley Gressel on the death of her husband Bill Gressel
- Kathy Piech-Lukas on the death of her father
- Mary Moore on the death of sister
- Mary Sousa on the death of mother
- Michelle D'Amico on the death of her mother
- Diane Biehle on the death of her mother

January

- Warren Bousquet on the death of his brother
- The Oelker family on the death of Rita Oelker
- Kevin Stang on the death of his mother Mary Stang
- Rose Perry on the death of her mother
- Sandra & Terry Harp on the death of their son



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