

Stronica Proboszcza

The Pastor's Page

March 22nd, MMXX

Fourth Sunday of Lent, Laetare Sunday

Month of Saint Joseph

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Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!
Praised be Jesus Christ!

This weekend we had planned to observe our annual Solemn Forty Hours Devotion. Unfortunately that will not be possible this year. Nevertheless, the Holy Eucharist continues to be one of the greatest joys in the lives of both priests and laity. The Eucharist makes us happy! I can say as a priest that celebrating the Mass is probably the thing I enjoy most about being a priest! I cannot put into words the joy that is caused by bringing the living presence of Christ Jesus into people's lives through celebrating the Holy Eucharist. So this Sunday, even though we cannot be in church, let us spiritually honor and adore that divine presence.

This Fourth Sunday of Lent is called *Laetare Sunday*.

This name comes from the first word of the Latin prayers assigned to the Mass this Sunday. *Laetare*, is the imperative form of the verb to rejoice or be happy. That means they are commands. *Be happy! Be joyful! Cheer up! Rejoice and shout for joy!* These are the Church's sentiments this day and there is so much to be happy about, even during Lent or perhaps even because of Lent! Christ's suffering and death was tragic, there's no refuting that fact but only IT could bring about the great joy of the Resurrection! The penance of Lent is not an end unto itself. No! It is directly ordered toward all the joy and gladness and celebration that Easter brings! The one MUST lead to the other! In spite of all the problems in this world, and there are many, there is also so much to be happy about. There is beauty and goodness all around us. Our task is to seek it out, and be thankful for it!

The name "Rose Sunday" comes from the papal blessing of the golden rose, a symbol of spiritual joy. The floral spray was blessed by the pope on the Fourth Sunday of Lent and sent to some notable person or institution to acknowledge and honor special service or loyalty. There is a small container of musk and balsam in the heart of the spray's principle rose. When visiting the shrine of the Black Madonna, Our Lady of Częstochowa at Jasna Góra in Poland, a golden rose from Pope John Paul II, blessed on this Fourth Sunday of Lent, can be seen hanging next to the Icon.

The practice of forty hours of continuous devotion to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament originated in Milan, Italy about the year 1530. By 1550, both St. Philip Neri and St. Ignatius Loyola had also instituted this practice in their religious orders, namely the Oratorians and the Jesuits, especially for the reparation of sin. This devotion commemorates the forty hours Jesus was entombed. The purpose of the devotion is to nurture the love of the faithful for Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Three special dimensions have traditionally surrounded this devotion: the protection from evil and temptation; reparation for our own sins and for the Poor Souls in Purgatory; and deliverance from political, material, or spiritual calamities. During the adoration the faithful implore Our Lord to pour forth His abundant graces not only for themselves, but their neighbors, not only for their own personal needs, but for those of the world.

In our own country, St. John Neumann, the fourth bishop of Philadelphia, was a strong promoter of the Forty Hours Devotion. While the practice had already existed in individual churches throughout the city, as well as in other places in the country, no organized, cohesive diocesan schedule for it had ever before been attempted. St. John had a tremendous devotion to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and desired to foster such a spiritual life in his people.

Unfortunately at this time, a strong anti-Catholic sentiment plagued Philadelphia. During the Know Nothing riots of 1844, two churches were burned and another was saved simply by the threat of gunfire. Some priests, therefore, advised St. John that the introduction of the Forty Hours Devotion would only flame the hatred against Catholics and expose the Blessed Sacrament to desecration. St. John was left in a quandary.

A strange incident occurred which helped St. John decide. One night, he was working very late at his desk and fell asleep in his chair. The candle on the desk burnt down and charred some of the papers, but they were still readable. He awoke, surprised and thankful that a fire had not ignited. He fell on his knees to give thanks to God for protection, and heard His voice saying, "As the flames are burning here without consuming or injuring the writing, so shall I pour out my grace in the Blessed Sacrament without prejudice to My honor. Fear no profanation, therefore; hesitate no longer to carry out your design for my glory."

He introduced the practice of Forty Hours Devotion at the first diocesan synod in April, 1853, and the first devotions began at St. Philip Neri Parish, an appropriate place since that saint had initiated the devotion in the city of Rome. St. John Neumann himself, spent most of the three days in the church praying. No trouble ensued. He then introduced the program for the whole diocese, so that each parish would have Forty Hours Devotion during the course of the year. He composed a special booklet for the devotion and obtained special indulgences for the faithful attending them. The Forty Hours Devotion was so successful it spread to other dioceses. At the Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1866, the Forty Hours Devotion was approved for all dioceses of the United States.

The annual Forty Hours Devotion provides a wonderful opportunity for the spiritual growth of every Catholic and of the parish as a whole. In a world where temptation and evil abound, where devotion to the Mass and Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist have declined, where the practice of penance and confession have been forgotten, we need the Forty Hours Devotion more than ever!

Wednesday, March 25th – Solemnity of the Annunciation of Our Lord

The Feast of the Annunciation is March 25th, which is exactly nine months before Christmas Day, the day we commemorate Christ's birth. It is the day we remember the Archangel Gabriel's visit to the humble virgin named Mary, when he conveyed to her God Almighty's invitation to play an important role in salvation history. This is the day that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." When Mary responded positively to the angel's request the Holy Spirit came upon her and she conceived in her womb Jesus the Son of God. The Church proclaims this a Solemn Feast Day. Even during Lent we are permitted to rejoice and celebrate. It is a day to recall the holiness of human life and how it begins so vulnerable in the womb. It is a day to look to Mary as the perfect role model in our faith life. She co-operated 100% with the divine will even though she could not fully understand it until much later in her life. The same, of course, is true for us. We will never understand fully what God is doing in our lives and in our world but we know God has a plan and he has revealed our part in the plan through the teaching of His Church. If we only do our part and trust in Him, one day we too just like Mary will understand everything!

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

March 12, 2020

ATTENDEES:

Fr. Mark Borkowski	Judy Kuncaitis
Michael Genaw - Excused	Trevor Cole
Sharon Zerafa	Fred Snyder
Cheryl Jurczyk	Tom Kleinow
Meredith Fortner – Absent	Debbie Bloomfield - Excused
Veronica Berryman	Stan Kulaszewski
Suzanne Figurski	

- Fr. Mark opened the meeting with prayer. Minutes from the previous meeting were accepted without change.
- **Christian Service Commission:** Nothing new to report at this time. Donations continue to the Wyandotte Food Pantry.
- **Education Commission:** 80% of the students at JP II have re-enrolled for next year. This is a very positive response to the new Classical Catholic School curriculum. There will be an open house at the school on April 1st. Fr. Mark reported that there will be 6 children making their First Communion on May 3rd, at the 12:00 mass. The one-day retreat for confirmation candidates was held on Saturday, March 7th. 13 of 14 candidates attended. Fr. Mark said other than the 5 new gray hairs he has, it was very successful.
- **Worship Commission:** Fred Snyder reported that preparations for 40 Hours have been completed. The complete schedule of services and events is in the Lenten schedule. Two new adult altar servers have been added. One new lector, who will be lecturing at the Polish mass, has been added. Organist, James Renfer will be leaving our parish. The last mass he will play will be Easter Sunday. He has accepted a fulltime position. We all wish him well. The organist crisis was averted when David Carle, our former organist, agreed to return. David will be doing the Saturday 4:30 masses, funerals, weddings etc. Vladimir Vaculik will now do all 3 Sunday masses.
- **Stewardship Commission:** The guys replaced the newly refinished sacristy doors. The wood has been returned to the original oak finish. Work on returning lights under the stations of the cross continues. The main altar project is in full swing. This project should be completed by Easter Sunday. Fr. Mark hopes to have the new podium in place by Christmas this year. Donations are still needed to complete this project.

- **Vicariate:** No report
- **Finance:** Stan Kulaszewski reported that since January we have reduced our total debt by \$9,000. There will be a full financial report in an upcoming bulletin. Our debt in 2013 was \$1,260,000. Our current debt is \$971,046.00.

Old Business Discussed:

- Fish Fries will be held Friday, March 13th. Fr. Mark said attendance at the dinner will determine if we continue them throughout Lent due to the virus.

New Business Discussed:

- Fr. Mark discussed the restoration as reported in the Stewardship Commission report.
- Christmas in July was discussed again. It will be held July 24, 25, with the dinner and main raffle on Sunday, July 26th. The process has begun to obtain the necessary liquor and raffle licenses that we are required by the State to obtain. The drop offs for Christmas articles have been happening since January. Preparations for this event are in full swing.
- The annual Polish Parish Festival was discussed. Festival dates this year are August 29-30th. The process to obtain the necessary licenses has begun for this event also. We are required by the state to obtain liquor and gambling licenses for the Vegas Tent, Bingo Tent and all the raffles. Updates on festival progress will be in the bulletins.
- Health precautions were discussed because of the Corona virus. The Archdiocese issued a statement asking all Catholics to stay home from attending mass if you are ill. It is NOT a mortal sin to miss mass because of illness.
- The next parish council meeting will be held April 30th.
- Fr. Mark closed the meeting with prayer.

**Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Jurczyk**