

February 26, 2017

"Which Day of the Week is Ash Wednesday This Year?"

I have been used to the question, "Father, what time is Christmas Midnight Mass this year?"...although for the last five years, our Midnight Mass has begun at midnight and no longer at 8 pm or 10 pm, as in earlier years. Usually, at this time of year, the question to our staff has been, "At what time do you distribute ashes this year?" and the response has always been: you can come to any of the three Masses this Ash Wednesday – 9 am, 12 noon, or 7 pm! You may have heard of a non-Catholic Christian Church in Charles County which has begun to distribute ashes at a drive-thru location. Yes, the receiving of ashes is a wonderful reminder that we are entering the forty days of the joyful Season of Lent. Yesterday someone asked me a new question: "Which day of the week is Ash Wednesday this year?".

This year, **Ash Wednesday** happens to be on the first day of **March**. How do we determine the date of Ash Wednesday? It is always linked to Easter Sunday: Ash Wednesday is the Wednesday (yes, it is always a Wednesday!) before the First Sunday of Lent, which is six weeks before Easter Sunday (allowing for 40 days of Lent), which is the first Sunday after the Paschal Moon, which is the first full moon occurring after March 21, a proxy for the day of the Spring equinox (end of the winter season when the length of day equals the length of night). It is not as complicated as it sounds and we will quiz you when you come to attend one of our three Masses on Ash Wednesday (March 1, this year). As the Easter Moon is on Tuesday, April 11 and therefore, Easter Sunday is rather late: April 16! The earliest date of any Easter Sunday is March 22 and the latest is April 25). There is a logic behind all this, as we know that historically Jesus' death is related to the date of the Jewish Passover, which is linked to the Paschal Moon.

This year our parish has chosen as a **Lenten theme**, one key verse from John's Gospel: "**Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**" (John 1:29). Every parishioner is invited to meditate on this powerful exhortation from John the Baptist! In the last two months since Christmas, we have spoken a lot about the **Lamb of God**. You all remember Scott Hahn's book, "**The Lamb's Supper**", give to each family attending Christmas Masses at OLHOC and discussed on January 26. If you did not attend our parish discussion, or have just begun to read the book, we invite you to read the whole book during the forty days of Lent. If you have already read the entire book, we invite you to read the Book of Revelation (at least the passages most frequently quoted by Scott Hahn). If you have given the book away to a friend, we invite you together with the whole parish to **meditate on John 1:29**. We hear those words proclaimed by the priest every Sunday (or Saturday evening), right after the **Sign of Peace** and just before **Communion**. It is a special time to **adore Jesus**, the **Lamb of God**, really present in the **Eucharist**. It is a special time to remember that **Jesus dies** as a sacrificial **lamb** to take away all our sins and to prepare ourselves to **receive Him**. It is a special time to remember that Jesus instituted both **Sacraments: Reconciliation** (Confession) and **Eucharist**

Mass Intention

Saturday, Feb. 25, 9:00 AM: Bill Newman +
Sunday, Feb. 26, 8:30 AM: George Albrittain +
Sunday, Feb. 26, 10:00 AM: OLHOC Parishioners
Sunday, Feb. 26, 11:30 AM: Jose & AnnaMarie Gonzales & Family +

Prayer Requests

We are asked to pray for: Theresa Beinert, Mike Connolly, Jessica Curry Miller, LaShay Barnes, Robin Dwars, Julieta Bool, James Knapp, Wilbur Etbauer, Fr. Thomas Crowley, Fr. Eamon Dignan, Zach White, Lisa Rullo, Susan Walker, Doris Conover, Jordan Hamacek, Elijah Larson, Sunni Park, Mireille Obas, Joan Etbauer, Joseph Cheseldine, Sr., Consuela Velasquez, John Lohman, Wilhelmina Franck, Robbie Atchinson, Tabitha Barton, Isabel Smith, Michael Sofield Jr., Elinore Fortney, Patricia Moffat, Errol Randall, Dorothea Johnson, Vanessa Barrett, Jean Erick Joassaint, Graham Baldwin, Jane Watson, Caroline Buoy, Ollie Johnson, Kathy Baumgaertner, Baby Kaden, Dennis Archible Jr. Emiliano Hilario, Phillip Green, Doris Chesley, Patricia & James Robey, Dick White, Ada Johnson, James Thompson, Sean Guido, Marcus Williams, and all our military and civilians serving in harm's way.

Our condolences to the family and friends of **Mae Hawkins**.

Mass Readings for March 5, 2017

First Sunday of Lent

First Reading- Genesis 2: vs. 7-9; 3: vs. 1-7

Second Reading- Romans 5: vs. 12-19

Gospel-Matthew 4: vs. 1-11

Ash Wednesday

The season of Lent is almost upon us and we will begin that special time on **Ash Wednesday (Mar. 1, 2017)**. Masses will be held at 9:00 am, 12 noon, and 7:00 pm. **Stations of the Cross** begin on **Friday, March 3, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.**

(Cont.) (Communion). It is a special time to remember that if we have we have committed serious sins and have not yet asked God's forgiveness through the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession), we are no longer in a state of grace, and cannot receive Communion on that Sunday.

You will see in our schedule of parish Lenten activities, that we will all have many opportunities to **adore** the Blessed Sacrament, to go to **Confession**, and to **attend Masses** (weekdays and weekends). As we meditate on John 1:29, we are also invited to be evangelizers, true disciples of Christ, **intentional disciples** like John the Baptist who constantly invited people to follow Jesus! We are all encouraged during the Lenten Season to **invite at least one person to come** with us and **see**, by participating in one or more of our Lenten events. May God bless every one of us as we prepare to enter those joyful 40 days of **Lent!** May this Lent be our best ever Lent and may we all feel the presence and **love of Christ** in our daily lives!

One in Christ, Fr. Alain

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

CCD Class Schedule

Our Lady Help of Christians 2016-2017 CCD Registration is open online: www.olhoc.org.

Feb. 26/27- CCD

Mar. 4- Spirit Day- Conf. Yr. 2

Mar. 5/6- CCD

Mar. 12/13- CCD

Contact **Therese Thiedeman** at 301-645-7112 or dre@olhoc.org

Parish Youth Night !

Life Teen: high school youth ministry (Sun., 5-6:30 pm, Mar .5, 12, 26; Apr. 2, 9, 30; May 7)

Edge: middle school youth ministry (meets monthly)

FIAT: elementary school Faith in Action Team (meets monthly)

Attention Families!!

The next **All-Youth Night** (FIAT, Edge and Life Teen) will be **February 26** and will begin with **4:00 PM Mass** followed by **pizza, fellowship** and **FIAT, Edge, and Life Teen meetings**. **Bring your friends ! See the website at: olhoc.org/ym.**

Steubenville Youth Conference

Steubenville is a weekend (Fri-Sat) Catholic Youth Conference for students currently in 8th-12th grade, that is similar to a retreat experience. This amazing weekend (June 23-25, 2017) features a series of talks from popular motivational speakers from across the country, Adoration, confession, Mass and more. For more details and to register visit www.olhoc.org/ym and click on Life Teen. Don't delay, limited spots available!

Upcoming Child Protection Classes

Go to VIRTUS.org to register. Call Nieda or Therese with questions at 301-645-7112.

! OLHOC Parish Family Mission !

Mark your calendars for our upcoming **Parish Family Mission, March 13th, 14th, and 15th**. This year's mission will be led by a husband and wife team and will include praise and worship, interactivity, prayer, dynamic talks, Adoration, our Lenten Penance Service, and more. A Children's Ministry tied to the nightly Mission themes will be held during the Mission for children 2 1/2 to 4 years old, and 5 to 10 years old, but **requires pre-registration**.

Pick up a brochure today to discover more about our upcoming Parish Family Mission and plan on attending!

Save The Date

Our OLHOC Youth will be sponsoring and serving at a **Shrove Tuesday/Fat Tuesday Pancake Dinner** on **Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2017, from 5:30-7:30 pm**. Included are delicious pancakes, sausage, bacon, fruit and beverages. Tickets are **\$5 each (under 2 eat free)** and will be on sale after all Masses and in the office during the week. All proceeds will benefit the Youth Pilgrimage Fund.

OUR LADY'S LITTLE CHRISTIANS

<http://www.olhoc.org/preschool.html>

- Fall registration begins next Friday, **Feb. 17, 2017**, for all new students.
- Please call 301-645-7112 or email preschool@olhoc.org for information.

Community Outreach

All are welcome! The next **Shepherds' Table Dinner** will be held on **Thursday, March 16, 2017** at Good Shepherd Church. Due to Ash Wednesday, the **March meeting** will be held on **Thursday, March 2** at 7 pm.

Volunteers go to: www.olhoc.org and click on the Community Outreach link. or sign-up at: www.SignUpGenius.com/go/60B044FABAD2DAA8-olhc

Our OLHOC Outreach Committee is now a sponsor of the Catholic Charities' "Snack Sak" Program. These weekend "Saks" provide nourishing food for children in need (and siblings) when school is not in session. For more information/if you would like to help, contact Brenda DiCarlo at 301-274-0695.

Shepherd's Table

Approximately 60 people enjoyed a Chik-fil-A dinner at the February Shepherd's Table. Many thanks to our Menu Coordinators Joy & Steve Fisher and our hard-working volunteers. Mary's Helping Hands again provided a sheet cake for dessert, as well as supplies for our pb & j sandwich table. Also, thanks to Margot & Russell Savoy (snack bags) and Cecelia Spinks (bottled water).

All Are Welcome

You are invited to **join us** for a Sunday morning Bible Study at **both 9:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.** in the Social Hall, as we "**Unlock the Mystery of the Bible**".

Supporting Families with Special Needs

Join us for a special day of reflection led by the **Archdiocese of Washington Department of Special Needs Ministries** on **March 11, 2017 from 9 a.m. 1 p.m. here at OLHOC**. Let us gather together to pray, reflect, and continue to learn about supporting our families with special needs in faith formation and beyond. All are welcome to attend. Catechists and parents of children with special needs are especially encouraged to attend. Childcare and lunch will be provided. **Registration is required: 301-459-7464.**