

January 28, 2018

Emergency Alert!

“EMERGENCY ALERT, BALLISTIC MISSILE THREAT INBOUND TO HAWAII.
SEEK IMMEDIATE SHELTER. THIS IS NOT A DRILL.”

These are the words that popped up on the cell phones of thousands of people in Hawaii at 8:10 am on Saturday January 13 , 2018 (less than two weeks ago). Can you imagine you're eating breakfast with your family when receiving this **emergency alert**? Do you know where the closest shelter is? Do you panic? What goes through your mind when you hear emergency sirens while stuck in an overcrowded highway? Later on, one of the residents told the press, "We fully felt we were about to die." It took **38 minutes** for the officials to send out a second message that the earlier one was sent out in error - It was a **false alarm!**

When was the last time you received an emergency alert? For many of us in Waldorf, it may have been the rare tornado warning around 3 pm on Saturday, February 25, just last year. I remember hearing beeps on cell phones while holding a meeting in my office. I was told that this was a tornado warning, but I foolishly continued the discussion in my office, while staying away from the window. A few minutes later, high winds blew over the trees outside my office. This was not a false alarm as in Hawaii. Later on, I learned that our church building was in the middle of the **tornado** path. We were blessed that there was no major damage and that no one was injured.

Last week I began my homily asking, "**Is time running out?**" This was prompted by St. Paul's emergency alert to the Corinthians: "I tell you brothers and sisters, the time is running out...**For the world in its present form is passing away.**" (1 Corinthians 7:29-31) Is the world in its present form passing away? Are we worried about major, sudden changes in our lives? Do we see signs to wake up, signs inviting us to change our lives? Do we look for shelters to protect our spiritual lives? Many of us live our daily lives without any major worries. We have daily routines: wake up call, breakfast , 9 am to 5 pm work routine, commute home, dinner, night to rest. However, from time to time, as in Hawaii, we may face a totally new situation, totally unexpected: We may have a family member diagnosed with a terminal illness or we may lose our job as a result of government downsizing ...We may be totally unprepared...but God may send us a **sign** that it is time to change: As Jonah proclaiming God's message to the inhabitants of Nineveh: "**Forty days more and Nineveh shall be destroyed**", or as **Jesus** beginning his public ministry: "**Time to repent and believe in the Gospel.**" (Mark: 1:14-15)

The **good news** is that **God** is always there to help us, whether in good times, or in times of crisis! **God's love** for us is **infinite**. He is always ready to forgive us. Like the Father of the Prodigal Son, He is always ready to welcome us back with **open arms**. Like the **Good Shepherd**, He is always seeking out the sheep who go astray and He always rejoices when He finds the lost sheep! Last week, I was blessed to be an instrument for an extremely ill woman and her husband to return to God after many, many years of having left the church: It took only half an hour prompted by the realization that **time was running out**: **God** had sent this couple a "text message" that it was time to see a priest, to **reconcile**, to **receive the Eucharist**, and to promise GOD with His help a **return to Sunday Mass!**

As we get closer to Lent (beginning Wednesday, February 14), **God** is inviting all of us to reflect on where we are in our journey of Faith; to avail ourselves of the amazing graces of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, (our Lenten Penance Service will be on Tuesday, February 27- mark your calendars!), and to ask God's help in removing the chains of attachment to sins. We cannot do this change alone. We all need God's help through the Church Sacraments instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ. Maybe time is running out. Maybe the current world as we know it is passing away. Maybe our days on this earth are counted...yet, we are not to be worried by Emergency Alarms (true or false). We are to be **ready!**

May God keep blessing each one of us and may His Mother Mary continue to protect us and lead us to Her Son Jesus!

*One in Christ,
Fr. Alain*

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Prayer Requests*

We are asked to pray for: Michael Proctor, Nellie Lynch, Edmund Madden, Abigail Poole, Sarah Parker, Dennis Forgash, David DeMarr, Janice Watson Moore, Joseph Mason Proctor, David & Georgiana Norgren, Ann Garner, Awethash Berania, Larry McGraw, Cecilia Spinks, Chantelle Angelini, Sonia Knapp, Lynn & Ronald Henrion, Liz Marcus, Ebony Jenkins, Tina Gallagher-Detwiler, Judy Studds, Vincent Argiro, Sr., Pearl Green, Graham Waldon, James Thompson, Doris Chesley, Joseph Albrittain, Ester Baraquio, Chris Goldhammer, Fr. Robert Pittman, Brenda Dobson, and all our military and civilians serving in harm's way.

Parish Family sympathies are extended to the families of Monica Myers, Felisberto Prodigalidad, and Janice Watson-Moore.

*Names will remain on our list for 3 months. Please call the parish office to re-request a name after 3 months or to remove a name when the person has regained health.

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

CCD Class Schedule

Our Lady Help of Christians 2017-2018 CCD registration is open online: www.olhoc.org.

Jan. 27-First Reconciliation Retreat and Sacrament, 9:00 AM to Noon.

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- check website)

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)** is this **Sunday, Jan. 28, 2018** and will begin with **4:00 PM Mass** followed by **food and fun from 5:00-6:30**. **Bring your friends!** See the website at olhoc.org/ym.



The parish is invited to a feast and fellowship on Shrove Tuesday, Feb. 13, before fasting for Lent. Tickets are \$5 (under 2 eat for free) selling after all Masses or in the office. All proceeds will benefit the Youth Pilgrimage Fund.

Upcoming Youth Events!!

Middle school and high school students: Join us as a cast or crew-tech member for this year's **Living Stations of the Cross**. We will need youth for roles as Jesus, Mary, soldiers, Simon, Veronica, weeping women – No lines to memorize! Rehearsals begin soon to perform on Sunday, March 18 & 19 to the CCD students. Parish performance is Friday, March 23. Sign up www.olhoc.org/ym.

We still have spots available for Mount 2000 in Emmitsburg, Steubenville Youth Conference and many more events! For more info, visit www.olhoc.com/ym or contact Marlen at: marlen@olhoc.org.

For more information and youth opportunities, please visit www.olhoc.com/ym or contact Mrs. Marlen Coles marlen@olhoc.org.

Mass Intentions this Week

Saturday, Jan. 27, 5:00 PM: OLHOC Parishioners

Sunday, Jan. 28, 8:30 AM: Mary Anne Sessa-Murry (+)

Sunday, Jan. 28, 10:00 AM: Sarah Parker

Sunday, Jan. 28, 11:30 AM: Joseph Mason Proctor

Monday, Jan. 29, 9:00 AM: Peter Nikolai (+)

Tuesday, Jan. 30, 9:00 AM: Florante Magali (+)

OUR LADY'S LITTLE CHRISTIANS

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

- Please call 301-645-7112 or email : preschool@olhoc.org for information.

English/French Mass

Our monthly **French Mass** is scheduled **every week** at **1:00 PM** in a bilingual setting.

Community Outreach

The next **Shepherd's Table Dinner** will be held on **Thursday, February 15, 2018** at **Good Shepherd Church**. Menu coordinators are needed for April, May, etc.

Volunteers go to: www.olhoc.org and click on the Community Outreach link.

Come join us at our next Outreach Committee Meeting on **February 1, at 7:00 PM** in **Rm. #105**. **New members and ideas are welcome**; our meetings are held to 60 minutes!

Sharing Sunday

Sharing Sunday is the first Sunday of the month. Non-perishable food items may be left in the Social Hall in boxes marked 'Food Donations' and will be donated to the Southern Maryland Food Bank.

Save the Date!

Please mark your calendar to join us on **Thursday, January 25**, in the Parish Social Hall at **7:00 PM** for the group discussion of the book "**Joy to the World**" by Dr. Scott Hahn. Many of us are enjoying this easy-read and look forward to an evening of fellowship and shared inspiration!

Tax Letter

Tax letter verification of your 2017 contributions can be made available to you by February 9. Please email your request to the church office at office@olhoc.org or call 301-645-7112.

Mass Readings for February 4, 2018

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading – Job 7: 1-4, 6-7

Second Reading – 1 Corinthians 9: 16-19,22-23

Gospel – Mark 1: 29-39

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