

February 4, 2018

Mixing Water and Wine!

A long-time parishioner asked me earlier this week, "Father, at Mass why does the priest mix a little bit of water into the wine?" This is a great question. As children, my brother and I served hundreds of times as altar servers and would bring the water and the wine to the priest during the preparation of the gifts on the altar. I observed the priest taking first the wine and pouring it into the chalice. Then, he would take the water and mix just a little bit into the wine. Until I entered the seminary 12 years ago, I never understood this mixing and I never asked the question! I also did not know that at that very moment the priest would say a **silent prayer**: "**By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity.**" Does that silent prayer help us find the answer to the mystery of mixing of water and wine? Yes, because it reminds us of the **Mystery of the Incarnation**, which is central to the understanding of the Mass: Jesus Christ is both divine and human. Jesus Christ is both God and man. We believe that the wine will be transformed into the Blood of Christ at the moment of Consecration when the priest asks the Holy Spirit to come upon the bread and wine on the altar and says the words pronounced by Jesus at the Last Supper: **Take this all of you, and eat of it, for this is my body which will be given up for you...Take this all of you and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant which will be poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of Me.**"



But the above silent prayer does not give the totality of the answer to the question of why mix the wine and water. My own simple interpretation is that the wine represents Jesus, and the water represents us, and at the very moment I mix them at Mass, we are all invited to become **One in Christ** when we receive Jesus in the **Eucharist** at Communion. It is, however, a bit more complex. Referring to Edward Sri's book, A Biblical Walk through the Mass, (which we used six years ago to help us understand the changes being made at the time in the English translation of the original Latin text of the Mass), see chapter 14, "Mixing Water and Wine, Washing Hands and Prayer over the Offerings." Edward Sri writes, "The mingling of the water and wine points to the Incarnation: the mystery of God becoming man. It also points to our call to share in Christ's divine life, to **become partakers of the Divine Nature** (Second Letter of Peter 1:4)".

I also went to the excellent book The Mass by our own Cardinal Donald Wuerl. In the chapter on the preparation of the gifts, page 145, Cardinal Wuerl adds that most of the descriptions of the Passover meal describe the mixing of water and wine, as it was the custom for most Mediterranean people to store wine in a concentrated form and then dilute it at mealtime. Cardinal Wuerl continues with interpreting the power of the symbol of mixing water and wine to this day: "As a symbol, it had staying **power**. First of all, it provided a historical connection with the Passover Seder meal, which Christians were eager to preserve.... In the second century, Saint Irenaeus of Lyon, France, saw that mixture as a symbol of the **union of the human and divine natures** in Jesus Christ: like the water and wine, they were so close as to be inseparable. Some decades later, St. Cyprian, a North African, saw the mixture as a symbol of the communion of Christ with the Church-again, so close as to be indistinguishable from one another. And, of course, down the centuries, many saints have seen the mixture of wine and water as a vivid image of the blood & water that **poured forth** from the pierced side of Christ on the cross (see John 19:34)."

We all need to **improve our understanding** of the Mass, which is so central to our Catholic Faith. I hope some of you will have found the above helpful and that it may assist you in your own relationship with Christ, reminding you that you and Christ can become **one** like the little bit of water (us) totally mixed into the wine (Him). If you have any questions about the Mass, please let me know when I greet you in the Narthex (before or after Mass) or send me an email at pastor@olhoc.org, or put your written question in the Suggestion Box in the Narthex and I will try to answer you. If you find it helpful, I may include my answer in future weekly bulletins.

May the Holy Spirit open your heart to the mysteries of the Mass and help you strengthen your personal relationship with Jesus Christ!

*One in Christ,
Fr. Alain*

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Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

CCD Class Schedule

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

Feb. 18-19: No class during President's Day Holiday

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 parish is invited to a pancake 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. 

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, Feb. 3, 9:00 AM: Mr. & Mrs. Rivert & Helene Obas(+)

Saturday, Feb. 3, 5:00 PM: Helen Koscheka (+)

Sunday, Feb. 4, 8:30 AM: Monica Myers (+)

Sunday, Feb. 4, 10:00 AM: Rafaél Dunham

Sunday, Feb. 4, 11:30 AM: OLHOC Parishioners

Monday, Feb. 5, 9:00 AM: William Newman (+)

Tuesday, Feb. 6, 9:00 AM: Elizabeth Marcus (+)

Wednesday, Feb. 7, 9:00 AM: Kathleen Parker (+)

Prayer Requests *

We are asked to pray for: Wilbur Etbauer, R. Todd Iddings, Michael Proctor, Nellie Lynch, Edmund Madden, Abigail Poole, Sarah Parker, Dennis Forgash, David DeMarr, Joseph Mason Proctor, David & Georgiana Norgren, Ann Garner, Larry McGraw, Cecilia Spinks, Chantelle Angelini, Sonia Knapp, Lynn & Ronald Henrion, Ebony Jenkins, Tina Gallagher-Detwiler, Judy Studds, Vincent Argiro, Sr., Pearl Green, Graham Waldon, James Thompson, Doris Chesley, Joseph Albrittain, Ester Baraquio, Chris Goldhammer,

* UPCOMING Child Protection Workshops *

Mandatory for anyone who has contact with children at OLHOC. www.Virtus.org

St. John Vianney, Pr. Frederick, Feb. 8 @ 7 p.m.

St. Mary's School, Piscataway, Feb. 20 @ 6 p.m.

Please call the church office or email: pre-school@olhoc.org for information.

English/French Mass

French Mass is scheduled for every Sunday in February at **1:00 PM** in a bilingual setting.

Community Outreach

Thank you to our OLHOC Youth Group and all those who helped with the January Shepherd's Table spaghetti dinner. You did a wonderful job! Thank you also to Olive Garden for providing salad & breadsticks, and to the Cheesecake Factory for the desserts! The next **Shepherd's Table Dinner** will be held on **Thursday, Feb. 15, 2018 at Good Shepherd Church.**

Next Outreach Committee Meeting is March 1 at 7PM—Looking for menu planning help—All are welcome!

Calling all Parishioners!

The OLHOC Alter Guild is looking for Happy Hands to help keep our worship space clean! Please contact Diane Spurgeon at 301-752-3930 or afbabe1@verizon.net.

Mass Readings for February 11, 2018

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading - Leviticus 13: 1-2, 44-46

Second Reading - 1 Corinthians 10: 31-11: 1

Gospel - Mark 1: 40-45

Prayer Requests Continued

Fr. Robert Pittman, Brenda Dobson, and all our military and civilians serving in harm's way.

Parish family sympathies are extended to the family of Liz Marcus.

**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.*