

# St. Francis of Assisi Old Catholic Church

Lent/Easter

April, 2019



We are a Christ-centered faith community formed to worship God where all are invited. We are welcoming, loving one another by embracing diversity, fostering spiritual growth and hope, living the gospel in the world, and recognizing the God who lives in all.

*A different way to be Catholic.*

## Events

Things are happening in our community. Our church is alive and active. Come, participate and enjoy fellowship with your church community and your greater community.



We meet at 6:00 pm at the church and, following our scripture study, adjourn to a nearby restaurant to share a meal.

Won't you join us?



## Spirituality Group

The entire Faith Community is invited to join this group for sharing our stories of struggle and joy in our faith journeys.

Meetings rotate among members' homes and conclude with a potluck dinner.

## Interfaith Ministry Opportunities

**Laundry love: April 16**  
4-6 or 6-8pm

Booms Laundry  
250 Elm St.  
Biddeford

**Senior Lunch: April 23**  
10:45 – 12:00

St. David's Episcopal Church  
Kennebunk

## Outreach

### Shelter Ministries

There is a continuing need for diapers for the York County Homeless Shelter. We have made a commitment to help fulfill this need and continue to do so on an as needed basis.

There is also a dire need for Friskies poultry flavored canned cat food at the Safe Haven animal shelter which is another recipient of our outreach.

**In March we delivered 131 cans of cat food, 12.6 lbs. of dry food, 2 pkgs. of treats and 20 lbs. of litter.**



### BLESSING BAGS

As part of our ongoing outreach to the greater community, we are handing out "blessing bags" (filled with several essentials for an individual on the street) to those who need them.

Please consider becoming a part of this ministry and carry a blessing bag in your car.



### Donate Bottles and Cans

Thank you to all in the community who collect returnable bottles and cans for our CLYNK campaign. The money collected goes to the Wells Fuel Fund for those who need help during our cold winters.

**So far this year we have collected**

**\$38.90**

## Calendar

### Mass:

**Every Sunday – 9:00 a.m.**

952 Post Road (Route 1)  
Colonial Square  
Wells, ME



**Wednesday, April 3**

Liturgy Committee 6:30pm

**Thursday, April 4**

PC workshop 6pm

**Saturday, April 13**

**CHURCH CLEANING** 10am



**Sunday, April 14**

Palm Sunday

**Thursday, April 18**

Mass of the Lord's Supper 7pm

**Friday, April 19**

Veneration of the Cross 7pm

**Saturday, April 20**

Easter Vigil 8pm

**Sunday, April 21**

Easter Sunday Mass 9am



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## Lectionary Reading for the Month

### Emptying Ourselves as Jesus Did

By Roger Karban

No Scripture passage could set a more insightful theme for the month of April than the Fifth Sunday of Lent's first reading.

Prophesying during the sixth century B.C.E. Babylonian Exile, Deutero-Isaiah reassures his fellow Israelites that Yahweh is about to liberate them. Yet he frequently encounters a huge obstacle. The chosen people are fully aware of the great things Yahweh has done for them through the centuries. But they are no longer living in the 12th century B.C.E., and they are hundreds of miles removed from the promised land. Those to whom Deutero-Isaiah prophesies want to know, "What has God done for me lately, in downtown Babylon?"

He answers their objection by ingeniously using participles instead of finite verbs when he speaks of Yahweh entering their lives. For instance, instead of saying, "Thus says the LORD, who opens a way in the sea ..." he proclaims, "Opening a way in the sea, Yahweh ..." Participles make the action continue. What Yahweh's done in the past, Yahweh continues to do right here and now. Unfortunately, the translation doesn't seem to zero in on the continuing action in the same way that employing a participle does.

But Deutero-Isaiah uses participles in this context, he quickly removes all confusion, proclaiming some of Yahweh's most forceful words: "Remember not the events of the past, the things of long ago consider not; see, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" The prophet isn't inviting his people to tour a museum, he is forcing them to see what is actually happening in their lives as he speaks. He refuses just to deal in memories.

This insight is also at the heart of Paul of Tarsus' life and ministry. Yet in this Sunday's second reading, he confesses to his Philippians community that experiencing the risen Jesus in the present is a mixed bag. Though he is well along the path to "perfect maturity," he still hasn't taken "possession" of it. "Forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward the goal." The present will last a lifetime for the apostle, a lifetime in which he constantly hears the words of the psalmist reflecting on the "great things" Yahweh is doing for him.

Today's Gospel reminds us that much of the present we experience consists in forgiving others. Jesus leads the way by forgiving the anonymous adulterous woman, providing us one of the best known of all Scripture quotes: "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone."

Our traditional Palm Sunday readings trigger a similar examination of conscience. They are as pertinent to what is going on in our lives as the breakfast we ate this morning. If we are thinking only of the past as we hear these words, we have totally missed the point of the liturgy we are celebrating.

Some scholars insist that the best definition of a disciple of God is contained in this third song of the Suffering Servant of Yahweh. Deutero-Isaiah states, "Morning after

morning he [Yahweh] opens my ear that I may hear." God's true followers hit the floor every morning listening. Even before they say their prayers, they are listening for what God wants them to pray. It's never the same. Since the prophet's ministry is "to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them," we presume he personally prays to know both what is causing their weariness and what to say and do to alleviate it.

Paul, again writing to his Philippians, encourages them to listen to how the risen Jesus is telling them to die and rise with him. If they are not emptying themselves for others in their daily lives, they are not properly developing into other Christs. They will never be "exalted" in the way he is now exalted.

One aspect of emptying that Luke uniquely conveys in his Passion narrative is Christ's habitual concern for others. Only Luke's Jesus, for instance, heals the man whose ear was lopped off in the garden, looks directly at Peter after his denial, comforts the women lamenting his suffering, and assures the repentant thief he will share in paradise. The pain his Jesus is enduring doesn't stop him from helping others in pain. Luke teaches that our personal suffering never excuses us from relieving the suffering of those around us. I presume when he hears the psalmist question Yahweh's presence, he responds, "He/she is as close to us as the nearest person in need." No matter the pain, the great liturgical turnabout takes place at the Easter Vigil.

One hint that this Holy Saturday eucharistic formula is ancient comes from the fact that on this most important of Christian feasts, the first seven readings are from the Hebrew, not the Christian Scriptures, from a time when the Christian Scriptures were not yet regarded as "bible."

Ideally, all nine readings should be proclaimed. If for some "pastoral" reason we plan on skipping most of tonight's readings from the Hebrew Scriptures, the church demands we at least read the third passage — the one from Exodus 3: the crossing of the sea. A favorite of early Christian communities, it stresses the dramatic before and after of Yahweh's actions in the lives of the chosen people. On one side of the sea is slavery and death; on the other, freedom and life. Nothing better helped the people of the risen Jesus reflect on the event they were remembering this night. What happened to him is happening to them as they listen to the narrative.

Accustomed to just having a few drops of water poured over the heads of those being baptized, we miss the impact of Paul's words to the Romans reminding them of having been "buried" with Christ during their own baptisms. Because they'd been totally dunked down into the water, I presume some thought they actually were being drowned. They clearly understood what it meant to symbolically die with Christ, then be raised up. It was a perfect "outward sign" of what baptism accomplishes.

Luke conveys that same dying/rising contrast in this evening's Gospel. The Galilean women who carry spices to the tomb to anoint a dead man, learn he is not only alive, but is offering them a new, unique life. Of course, it seems nonsense to those who have yet to experience it, even to Peter, the Gospel disciple who has most to gain from that life. It's no longer just a story; it's an

(Cont. on next page)





Spotlight!



Installation and blessings of the new and re-elected Parish Council members took place on March 10. Above, from L to R: Pat E., Maryann S., Sarah R., Carol O., and Janet O'D.. Missing is Dawn S.

~~OUR NEWEST PARISHIONER !!!!!~~



Harrison, born to Jessica and Derek on Monday, 3/11/19 at 2:22 AM and weighing 7lbs. 9 oz. Jessica says he is a “mellow” baby. We can’t wait to welcome him to our “water family.”



Meditation/Prayer

The purpose of daily meditation/prayer is the cultivation of a sense of the sacred. Sacred energy renews us. Prayer enables us to transform the world, because it transforms us! Let’s commit ourselves to daily meditation/prayer...

**“Touch me and see for yourself.” Luke 24:39**

Praise to you, my risen Redeemer, who keeps on challenging the doubt in me, who perceives the Thomas in me and allows me those graceful times when I, too, can put my fingers into the signs and wounds of my everyday life and there come in contact with you.

Praise to you, my risen Lord, who keeps on meeting me in the garden of my life, who keeps on calling my name, allowing me to feel loved, blessed and cherished.

Praise to you, risen Jesus, who walks with me on my Emmaus journeys, coaxing the ache out of me, comforting and strengthening me with the intimate presence of yourself.

Praise to you, my risen Savior, who surprises me on the sandy beaches of my so often planned and programmed life, inviting me to come and taste what you have prepared. Time after time, you nourish me with all that I need to carry your risen presence with me, wherever I go and to whomever I meet.

Joyce Rupp, osm  
in Fresh Bread and Other Gifts of Spiritual Nourishment

**Parish Council**

- President: Sarah Rapone
- Vice-Moderator: Janet O’Day
- Treasurer: Dawn Saporito
- Secretary: Carol Olmstead
- Members-at-large: Janet O’Day  
Pat Emery  
Maryann Stacy

**The Most Reverend Dr. Rosemary Ananis, Pastor**

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