

St. Francis of Assisi Old Catholic Church

Easter/Pentecost/Ordinary Time

June, 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: June 18
4-6 or 6-8pm

Booms Laundry
250 Elm St.
Biddeford

Senior Lunch: June 25
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 as needed.

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 May we delivered 119 cans of cat food and 38 lbs of dry cat food.



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

\$70.15

Calendar

Mass:

Every Sunday – 9:00 a.m.

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



Sunday, June 2

Solemnity of the Ascension

Thursday, June 6

Parish Council

Sunday, June 9

Pentecost Sunday
(remember to wear red to Mass)

Sunday, June 16

PC/Community meeting

Saturday, June 22

Parish Council Retreat
8 am – dinner time
Shapleigh



Sunday, June 23

Agape Mass
Potluck breakfast

NO
NEWSLETTER
IN JULY
or
AGOSTO

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The Old Catholic Church
Province of the United States

Ancient Faith • Welcoming and
Inclusive Church • Serving the
Modern World

Lectionary Reading for June

The Holy Spirit's Disruptions of Wind, Noise and Fire

By Roger Karban

Without doubt, the most important celebration this month is Pentecost. It honors an occasion the early church couldn't have lived without. Yet, at the same time, many of us modern Christians get along very well without even thinking about the event. The Holy Spirit is typically a non-entity in our lives. Over the centuries, we have become so accustomed to falling back on the church structures we have created that we rarely reflect on how the risen Jesus originally set up his community — with the Holy Spirit at its heart.

It is providential that June begins with the feast of the Ascension. This celebration always brings up a basic biblical problem: What happened to Jesus after his resurrection? Our first two Gospels — Mark and Matthew — simply leave us hanging. He is just “out there somewhere.” Luke, in today's Acts of the Apostles reading, seems to have him change his zip code with a definitive ascension. Although it is clear from our Gospel pericope that Luke's Jesus, before his Acts event, ascends to heaven more than once. But then, he returns again to Earth to instruct his followers. Paul and his followers — including our Ephesians author — appear to avoid the historical question and just speak metaphorically about Christ's heavenly presence, seated at God's right hand, far above all other heavenly creatures. We can only be confident that Christ “reigns over the heavens.” Though many of us hesitate to admit it, our belief in Jesus' resurrection doesn't come with a black-and-white assurance of where the risen Jesus has been hanging out.

As we hear on the feast of Pentecost, the early Christian community is much more concerned with how the risen Jesus' ministry is to be carried on after his death and resurrection than with the definite location of Jesus' body. Everyone agrees that ongoing phenomenon is the role of the Holy Spirit. Yet, even then, there is no uniform answer about the arrival date of the Spirit. In our first reading, the Spirit comes on the Jewish feast of Pentecost; in the Gospel, the Spirit arrives 50 days earlier on Easter Sunday evening. But it is significant that all three readings zero in on a different aspect of the Spirit's work.

Our well-known Acts passage stresses the universality of Jesus' message and the assistance the Spirit renders in achieving it. Paul's pericope from the First Letter to the Corinthians brings up the gifts of the Spirit, which are essential to the Christian community's transformation into the body of Christ. And John insists that without the Spirit's power of forgiveness, the Christian community would not have come into existence. Finally, we seem to have this particular psalm only because we need to be reminded of the Spirit's demand for constant renewal.

Contrary to popular wisdom, there is no way the Spirit was given to the church for “extra credit.” Without the Spirit, there would be no church. If a church came into existence after Jesus' death and resurrection without the Spirit's presence, it wouldn't be a living entity. It would just be one more dead institution.

To avoid that pitfall, we are expected to constantly cultivate universality, develop our gifts and practice forgiveness. There is no other way to achieve true renewal.

Of course, depending on the Spirit in carrying on the ministry of the risen Jesus always creates problems, the kind of problems a static church never experiences. That seems to be why Luke zeros in on the three frightening phenomena that accompany the Spirit's upper room arrival: wind, noise and fire. And it also seems to be why many church leaders through the centuries have relegated the Spirit to the category of “don't call us, we'll call you.” The Spirit is simply too disturbing.

Before quantum theology came into vogue, most Christians were convinced a leader who provides the institution with peace and quiet is God's special gift. The fact that “disturbing” things rarely happen — or are blocked from happening — has long been considered one of the signs we are the true church. Authenticity, in that view, demands that we never have a reason for alarm.

On the other hand, quantum theology, using the entire universe as a model for understanding God's actions in our individual and community life, continually points out that nothing significant happens in our universe that is not accompanied by disturbances. There is always some kind of wind, noise and fire. Though I presume Luke knew nothing about modern quantum theology, he would personally experience the arrival of the Spirit in his community's life and could legitimately tell his readers about the agitation that accompanied it. The church's equilibrium is always disturbed whenever and wherever the Spirit shows up.

Keeping this in mind, it is providential we celebrate the feast of the Trinity immediately after Pentecost — especially because of this specific Gospel passage from John. It is amazing it has been included in our Scriptures. John's Jesus states, “I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth.” In other words, “You ain't seen nothing yet! The best is yet to come!”

We can know our Scriptures by heart, memorize every church dogma, and become an expert on each council decree, yet because of the Spirit's presence, there is always the possibility the risen Jesus will pull something out of the Spirit's hat in the next 10 minutes — something totally unforeseen.

Like all mothers, mine at times brushed aside some of my childhood aches and twinges as “growing pains,” assuring me they were nothing to worry about; anyone who is growing has them. If we belong to a static institution, we don't have to worry about growing pains. Yet Paul reminds the Christian community in Rome that “afflictions” are an essential part of continually becoming other Christs. The pains that eventually result in proven character don't have to come from outside. They are part and parcel of the growing pains the Spirit naturally causes. The painless aren't growing.

Nothing could be better than to celebrate the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ or Corpus Christi on the next weekend. Ignoring the Eucharist at this point would be “non-scriptural.” But notice our sacred authors are almost always interested in the actions that produce the body and blood of Christ, not the end result. Except for John 6, biblical references to the Eucharist revolve around what is necessary to make the risen Jesus present in the community. Following the axiom that Scripture is written when

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there are problems, those actions must have created difficulties for Jesus' second- and third-generation followers, else we wouldn't have today's second and third readings.

In passing on the earliest account of Jesus' eucharistic words, Paul is challenging those in the Corinthian church who are convinced they can celebrate the Lord's Supper without dying. They are to "proclaim the death of the Lord" by dying themselves — in this situation — by deeply becoming one with all around them. Notice in our Gospel passage that Jesus doesn't technically multiply the loaves and fish himself. He does only two things: He eventually forces his followers to surrender their meager food; then, he blesses it before they distribute it. Their food is multiplied in the sharing, as they finally die enough to themselves to set it before the crowd.

Flying in the face of canon law, a validly ordained minister doesn't have to recite unique sacramental words over the exact elements in order to make the risen Jesus present. For both Paul and Luke, all the members of the community accomplish this by simply giving themselves to others.

Just as the enigmatic pagan priest/king Melchizedek forever endears himself to Jews by showing hospitality and blessing Abram, so Spirit-filled Christians endear themselves to others by being open and becoming one with them.

Every semester, I apologize to my non-Catholic Christian students, some of whom rarely celebrate the Eucharist. Our ancestors in the faith could never have understood this. But in a way, it is our fault, not theirs. When like the early Corinthians, we remove dying from our eucharistic celebrations, we reduce the Lord's Supper to just a series of harmless words and actions. No skin off my teeth just to believe the risen Jesus is in the consecrated bread and wine. It is quite another thing to believe the risen Christ is in all those around us; it is an action that demands a real death, especially if those "others" are different from ourselves.

The readings of the 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time remind anyone committed to a Spirit-led eucharistic reform that we should expect to be in it for the long, tough run. It is a calling that parallels those of Elisha, Paul and the followers of Jesus. We are expected to burn our bridges (or oxen) behind us. We simply don't go back to a medieval past. Though the future prophet is permitted a parental farewell glance, Jesus forbids even that. His followers don't have the luxury of waiting for the ideal time of their parents' death to begin their discipleship.

No one has any idea where the Spirit will lead. Yet that is to be expected when one, as the psalmist says, takes refuge only in the Lord. (On a personal level, I never planned to spend most of my ministry studying and teaching Scripture. I began this Bible "stuff" simply as a preliminary to help people understand the council's reformed liturgy. Yet unbeknownst to me, the side dish eventually became the main course.)

That seems to be why Paul frequently rejoices in the freedom the faith of Jesus has brought into his life, and also why he's so uptight with the Galatians for exchanging that freedom for a secure collection of rules and regulations. Given his experiences in Galatia, he of all people would understand and condemn our present downplaying of the Spirit.

One of the most ridiculous Exodus complaints is in Numbers 11:5. Among other things, the recently freed — and ungrateful — Israelites whine to Yahweh that they don't have watermelons in this God-forsaken wilderness. They imply they would go back to being Egyptian slaves and completely surrender their new-found freedom if they could only sink their teeth into a juicy piece of that fruit.

Perhaps in the same way, we have traded the freedom of a Spirit-filled community for a spiritless, but peaceful, secure church. That just might be our irresistible watermelon.

In Celebration, June, 2019

Roger Vermaalen Karban is a priest of Belleville, Illinois and pastor-emeritus of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Renault, Illinois. He holds a licentiate in theology from the Gregorian University in Rome and pursued Scripture studies at Saint Louis University. He currently teaches at Saint Louis University and Southwestern Illinois College.

ALL ARE WELCOME AT OUR 16TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY

On Sunday, July 6th St. Francis of Assisi will be celebrating our 16th year as a faith community. The day will begin, as usual, with Mass at 9am after which all will travel to Silver Lake in Shapleigh for our annual cook-out with swimming and boating.

We would love for as many people who have been touched by our hospitality in any way help us celebrate this event. So if you are an occasional visitor or read this newsletter from afar and can make it to Southern Maine on that day, [please let us know in advance](#) so we can plan for enough food. You can call Bishop Rosemary at 207-251-9751 or email to stfrancisocc@gmail.com Hope to see you July 6!





Spotlight!



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 mediation/prayer...

Abba God, we want to find our joy in you and in all your promises to us. For you have promised that in the midst of all the pain and sorrow, you are preparing what pleases you and serves your honor in every heart. May we experience in our lives the fulfillment of many of your promises, so that again and again we can go forward joyfully, rising above difficult times and situations. Have mercy on us and protect us in your strength.

Amen.

Christoph Friedrich Blumhardt



ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YARD SALE!!

The weather was perfect for a yard sale over the Memorial Day weekend and the crowds came! We made \$481 to help us pay the bills and sold \$64 worth of raffle tickets (see below). As usual, a good time was had by all.

RAFFLE

The following prizes will be raffled off on **June 30**:

- 6 lobsters fresh from the sea
- \$100 gift certificate to Joshua's Restaurant in Wells
- \$50 gift certificate to Hannaford
- 450 gift certificate to Perkins Cove Candies

Tickets are \$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00

Please contact any member of the faith community for tickets and your chance to win!

Parish Council

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|-------------------|----------------|
| 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

Web Address: stfranciswellsme.org

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

Mailing Address: PO Box 771 Wells, ME 04090

Phone: (207) 251-9751