

St. Francis of Assisi Old Catholic Church

Lent

March, 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: March 19

4-6 or 6-8pm

Booms Laundry

250 Elm St.

Biddeford

Senior Lunch: March 26

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.

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 February we collected 54 cans of cat food, 6.5 lbs. of dry food, 2 pkgs. of kitty treats and 14 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

\$8.95

Calendar

Mass:

Every Sunday – 9:00 a.m.

952 Post Road (Route 1)

Colonial Square

Wells, ME



Sunday, March 3

Liturgy Committee following Mass

Ash Wednesday, March 6

Mass and Imposition of Ashes

6 pm



Thursday, March 7

PC workshop 6pm



Saturday, March 9

Lenten Retreat and Penitential Service 10-2

Sunday, March 17

Community meeting

Parish Council Presentations



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Ancient Faith • Welcoming and
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Modern World

Lectionary Reading for the Month

On the Verge of Lent, Remember the Essentials

By ROGER KARBAN

It is significant this year that the month containing the first four liturgical readings for Lent begins with the Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time. The Scripture passages for that weekend set the theme for the other four.

Liturgical historians always remind us that Lent did not begin as a penitential season. Originally, the weeks before Easter consisted in a joyful community preparation for the catechumens' baptisms and a yearly reminder of everyone's own baptism. Eventually, Lent stopped being a time of happy revival and morphed into a period of sacrifice.

We are encouraged to return to at least some of those baptismal themes, reminding us of what that sacrament means in our lives, as does the first Sunday of this month, the Eighth Sunday of the Year. Our liturgical readings stress that we should be people who actually do what God asks of us, not just think or talk about doing those things.

There are always people who don't do what they talk about doing. All plans, no fruit. More than 2,000 years ago, both Sirach and Luke's Jesus demand to see the fruit. Talk is cheap, fruit is expensive. We can, for instance, be deeply motivated to achieve the "incorruptibility" Paul and his Corinthian community are intent on achieving, yet never get around to pulling it off. Such a goal, for one reason or another, is always in our future, not our present. The fruit which the author of Psalm 92 presumes we will produce in our "old age" simply never materializes. We just never get around to it.

This dilemma is one of the reasons the early church was convinced we all need a Lent; not a time to give up things we like, but a few weeks to do a gut-check on what we are actually doing or not doing because of the faith we profess.

The First Sunday of Lent reminds us of this. We are never, for instance, to forget we are playing a role in salvation history. Just as Moses reminds his people in Deuteronomy that they are in a long line of Israelites who have committed themselves to Yahweh, so Paul reminds the Christian community in Rome that they are part of a larger people — both Jews and Gentiles — who have committed themselves to imitating the risen Jesus in their midst. Among other things, their commitment includes experiencing the same temptations Luke's Jesus endured and overcame during his earthly ministry. Along with the psalmist, we are convinced God will

eventually deliver us from the evil we encounter; yet we are never given a definitive date for that event.

We should emphasize the importance of the Genesis 15 passage heard the Second Sunday of Lent. It contains the biblical basis for Paul of Tarsus' argument that one can be a Christian without first becoming a Jew. During Paul's day and age, most Jews obligated themselves to keep the 613 Mosaic Laws, regulations which Yahweh gave the chosen people on Mount Sinai; in our calculation, about 1,200 B.C.E. That meant Abraham — the first Jew — couldn't have been "righteous" since he lived more than 400 years before Moses.

Paul argues in Romans 4 and Galatians 3 that Abraham was righteous — doing what Yahweh wished him to do — simply by putting his faith in Yahweh. So according to Genesis 15:6, one didn't have to be a Jewish keeper of the Sinai laws in order to be righteous; even non-Jews could imitate Abraham's faith.

Jesus, whom we imitate, includes everything in our faith that is necessary to give ourselves to others as he gives himself to us.

Obviously, everyone who goes down the path of that faith isn't always able to maintain such determination for a lifetime. Paul brings up some of their most egregious missteps in writing to the Philippian church. He can only hope and pray they eventually "stand firm in the Lord."

In the Third Sunday of Lent's Exodus pericope, the angel does not "cue the bush" when he sees Moses coming down the road. He doesn't have to; it was already on fire. It was always burning. Moses simply notices something everyone else overlooks. Like all common phenomena, Sinai furze bushes are so plentiful that people actually stop looking at them. Because they take their commonness for granted they don't even see them. Moses is the exception: he sees the fire. He alone perceives the divine in the most common of things.

Yet God's biblical calls go beyond just seeing what others overlook. Verses 9-12 of our Exodus liturgical reading have been omitted and it is in those lines that Yahweh tells Moses how he (Moses) personally is going to pull off this liberation thing. Contrary to popular religion, Yahweh rarely just jumps into action when we pray and instantly answers our petition. Almost always, the biblical God simply points out the path we are to take to have those prayers answered, a path which depends on our own actions. If we refuse to personally act, our prayers frequently go unanswered. True faith not only surfaces the problem, it also provides us the means to eradicate the problem. Whether we like it or not, God never expects us to be spectators in the stands applauding; we are to be on the stage. With sight comes responsibilities.

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No matter what “otherworldly” experiences we have, if we don’t act on them, they are worthless. Paul warns his Corinthian community about that fatal flaw in how we live our faith. Going back to the greatest of all Jewish experiences, the Exodus, Paul reminds his readers that only a few of those miraculously liberated Israelites who crossed the sea actually reached the promised land. Though marvelous things happened to the chosen people, unless they actually followed up by doing what Yahweh commanded, these tremendous events were worthless. The final Exodus only happened to those who actually did the things necessary to bring the Exodus about.

At some point in our personal salvation history, we have got to act.

We especially see some of the implications of those actions on the Fourth Sunday of Lent. Like the Israelites who finally make it into the promised land, we are responsible for some of things on which we formerly relied on God. As Yahweh reminds Joshua, the days of feeding the chosen people with manna are over. Twelve centuries later, the author of 2 Thessalonians couldn’t be more blunt: “If you don’t work, you don’t eat!” Somehow or another, we have got to participate in our own well-being.

For those who work at being other Christs, that work revolves around carrying on the ministry of the Christ. Paul sees that as a ministry of “reconciliation.” He points out to the Corinthians that such a ministry consists in being one with those around us. Just as the historical Jesus helped us become one with God — no matter our sins — so we should become one with others — no matter their sins.

That is why today’s well-known parable is so significant. It is much more a reflection on the “prodigal father” than on the “prodigal son.” Both go overboard; but, as disciples of the risen Christ, we should be imitating the father’s prodigal behavior, not the boy’s.

As for the older brother, those who stubbornly support his position are the people Jesus is trying to reach. They triggered Jesus’ parable. This hard-working, fair-minded son wants to create a world in which everyone is treated equally, a world in which everyone gets his or her “just desserts.” Yet Jesus wants us to go beyond equality, to always act with love. If we, imitating the psalmist, strive to relate to a God who “delivered (us) from all (our) fears,” we must also imitate God’s actions of generously loving those around us.

As other Christs, we are obligated to do much more than just think about giving such love.

Adapted from Celebration, March ‘19

Roger Vermalen Karban is a priest of Belleville, Illinois and pastor-emeritus of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Renault, Illinois. He holds a licenciate 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.

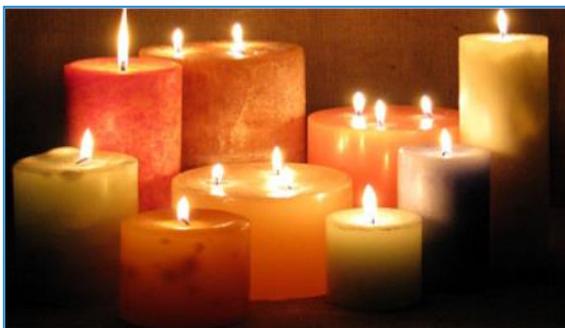
Jessica’s Baby Shower February 17



As usual, all responded with a great spread of food and lots of goodies for new “baby boy” to come.



Jessica and Sarah, her God-mother-to-be



Spotlight!

Annual Meeting February 24, 2019



The community gathered for the annual business meeting to hear reports from the Pastor, Treasurer, and Chairs of the Spiritual Life, Church Life, and Finance Committees.

The strategic 3-year plan was evaluated and revised, some necessary changes in the by-laws were approved, the budget for 2019 was discussed and approved and a new Parish Council Moderator, **Sarah Rapone**, was elected. **Debbie Gaudreau** was unanimously endorsed for the new position of Social Director.



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...

Loving God, during this Lenten Season,
nourish me with Your Word of life
and make me one
with You in love and prayer.

Fill my heart with Your love
and keep me faithful to the Gospel of Christ.
Give me the grace to rise above my human weakness.
Give me new life by Your Sacraments, especially the
Mass.

Divine Savior, our source of life,
I reach out with joy to grasp Your hand;
let me walk more readily in Your ways.
Guide me in Your gentle mercy,
for left to myself I cannot do Your Will.

God of love, source of all blessings,
help me to pass from my old life of sin
to the new life of grace.
Prepare me for the glory of Your Kingdom.
I ask this through Jesus Christ, Your Son,
Who lives and reigns with You
and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever.

Amen.

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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