

## FROM THE RECTOR

My dear People:

Writing this letter just before March arrives, I am wondering whether the month will come in like a Lion and go out like a Lamb or vice versa, as folk lore posits. It's perhaps unintentionally symbolic of our Lenten journey, led by Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is both the Lion of Judah and the Lamb of God. These two titles make reference to Our Lord as King and Sacrifice, the only remedy for our sins, and the one who by making this sacrifice raises us up to the new life that is with God the Holy Trinity. Pause, for a moment, to consider the Lion and the Lamb as it relates to weather and you will quickly see the connection to the real reason for this allusion.

The Lamb is known for being meek, a good farm animal who gives of himself for the comfort of us in various ways: the pure clean wool which cloths and warms us, and the meat which sustains us. The Paschal Lambs, which incidentally were the same ones those "Shepherds abiding in the fields keeping watch" on the night of the Nativity, pure and spotless were set for the ritual sacrifice of the Temple, their blood being sprinkled on the congregation in order to mark them as God's own, redeemed for yet another year.

The Lion is fierce, a predator; yet also, from earliest times, an animal seen as the king of beasts, regal and noble. To have "the heart of a lion" was meant as a compliment. The person to whom that compliment was given exhibited courage and strength against adversity and strife. The lion's roar was said to cause the animal kingdom to acquiesce to his authority. Very quickly the lion became the regal symbol of kingly power and authority, courage and righteousness.

So then, when we come to the end of March, and the beginning of April, we will see Our Lord in both these roles: the Lamb of God, he who takes away the sin of the world and the Lion of Judah, who in his Resurrection breaks the chains of sin and death and rises gloriously triumphant from the grave, taking us along with him. It certainly gives that old folk expression new meaning, when thought about in terms of our Faith, doesn't it?

Practicing a faithful Lenten discipline, as our month wears on, is no easy thing. I hope many of you will have taken advantage of last month's Lenten Rule recommendations and that you are deepening your Faith through them. As I write this, Friday Stations of the Cross & Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by a Simple Supper and our book class are about to begin. I am pleased with the interest shown in our class; and, I anticipate good attendance and participation in our Lenten programme. There are, however, two events scheduled this month, of which I would like you to be aware.

Friday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, in place of Stations & Benediction, we will have a simple Sung Mass for the Feast of S. Joseph, Spouse of Our Lady and foster father of Our Lord at 6 p.m. Please note, that our Lenten supper and class will follow the Mass that night. S. Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church, is rightly celebrated in the midst of Lent and it is my hope that we will be able to enjoy "S. Joseph" cakes. When I was a curate at S. Clement's, Philadelphia, an Italian bakery, Termini Bros., in South Philadelphia would sell them on that day only. The line up stretched out of the shop from early morning but the reward for waiting a good long time for those wonderful (and highly caloric!) pastries filled with ricotta cheese or, for the modernist, Bavarian cream, was well worth it. I gather such a delight can be had in these parts; so, don't be surprised if they turn up for that one Friday only (usually there are no desserts at the Friday dinners).

The following Wednesday night, March 24<sup>th</sup>, we shall sing the Mass for the Feast of the Annunciation at 6 p.m. The reason it will be on Wednesday night is to give us a bit of a breather before Stations & Benediction on Friday. When the Archangel Gabriel appears to Our Lady to ask on God's behalf if she would consent to be the Mother of the Messiah, God Incarnate, all creation held its breath awaiting her answer. Our Lady's "yes" to God changed everything forever; and, it is in that spirit that we celebrate this great feast in the midst of Passiontide.

Looking ahead, please take note of our Holy Week Schedule, published elsewhere in this newsletter. While I have tried not to change much in our schedule, nevertheless there is one change in the Triduum which I want to bring to your attention. Good Friday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, the time of the Good Friday Liturgy will be at **12 NOON** rather than at 6 p.m. We will have Stations of the Cross at 6 p.m. as a devotion; although neither Benediction nor the Lenten programme will be offered. See you there!

Affectionately, your Friend and Pastor,

## March is the Month of S. Joseph.

1	Feria (S. David, BC)	
2	Feria (S. Chad, BC)	The Church of England
3	Feria	Organist & Choir
4	Feria	The Sick
5	Feria	SSC
6	Feria (SS. Perpetua & Felicity, Mm)	Grace to withstand temptation
7	<b>LENT III</b> (S. Thomas Aquinas, CD)	<b>Parish</b>
8	Feria (S. John of God, C)	
9	Feria (S. Frances of Rome, W)	Hospice & Hospital Workers
10	Feria (Forty Holy Martyrs)	Persecuted Christians
11	Feria	Gift of true repentance
12	S. Gregory the Great, PCD ( <i>feria</i> )	Pope Benedict
13	Feria	March Chantry
14	<b>LENT IV</b>	<b>Parish</b>
15	Feria	
16	Feria	Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham
17	S. Patrick, BC ( <i>feria</i> )	Church of Ireland
18	Feria (S. Cyril of Jerusalem, BCD)	Peace in the Middle East
19	<b>S. JOSEPH, C</b> ( <i>feria</i> )	Carpenters & Tradesmen
20	Feria (S. Cuthbert, BC)	Sisters of S. Mary at Greenwich, NY
21	<b>PASSION SUNDAY</b>	<b>Parish</b>
22	Feria	
23	Feria	Increase in Parish Outreach
24	S. Gabriel, Archangel ( <i>feria</i> )	Intercession of the Angels
25	<b>ANNUNCIATION BVM</b> ( <i>feria</i> )	Thanksgiving for the Incarnation
26	<b>COMPASSION BVM</b> ( <i>feria</i> )	Increase in devotion to Our Lady
27	Feria (S. John Damascene, CD)	A right observance of Holy Week
28	<b>PALM SUNDAY</b>	<b>Parish</b>
29	<b>Monday in Holy Week</b>	Those making their Confessions this week
30	<b>Tuesday in Holy Week</b>	Sorrow for sin
31	<b>Wednesday in Holy Week</b>	A right observance of the Triduum

### MARCH AGENDA

5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>: **Stations of the Cross & Benediction** 6 p.m. Simple Supper & Book Class in the Guild Hall follows.

6<sup>th</sup>: Father Fraser leads the Lent Quiet Day at S. Stephen's, Providence 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

7<sup>th</sup>: **LENT III**: Low Mass 8 a.m., Rector's Forum 9.30 a.m., Sung Mass 10.30 a.m.

9<sup>th</sup>: Monthly Meeting of Vestry 6.30 p.m. in the Library.

14<sup>th</sup>: **LENT IV**: Low Mass 8 a.m., Rector's Forum 9.30 a.m., Sung Mass 10.30 a.m.

19<sup>th</sup>: **S. JOSEPH, Spouse of the BVM: Simple Sung Mass at 6 p.m.** Lenten Supper & Book Class follows.

21<sup>st</sup>: **PASSION SUNDAY**: Low Mass 8 a.m., Rector's Forum 9.30 a.m., Sung Mass 10.30 a.m.

24<sup>th</sup>: **SUNG MASS OF THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION BVM** at 6 PM.

28<sup>th</sup>: **PALM SUNDAY. Blessing of Palms, Procession & Sung Mass at 9.30 a.m.**

### HOLY WEEK & EASTER 2010

**Monday & Tuesday in Holy Week, March 29, 30**: Low Mass at 12.15 p.m.

**Wednesday in Holy Week, March 31**: Low Mass 12.15 p.m., Tenebrae 6 p.m.

**MAUNDY THURSDAY, April 1**: Sung Mass, Procession to the Altar of Repose & Stripping of the Altar 6 p.m. Watch at the Altar of Repose until Noon on Good Friday.

**GOOD FRIDAY, April 2**: Good Friday Liturgy at **12 NOON**. Stations of the Cross at 6 p.m.

**HOLY SATURDAY, April 3**: Easter Vigil & First Mass of Easter 8 p.m.

**EASTER DAY, April 4**: Procession & Sung Mass at **9.30 a.m.**

### **FROM THE PARISH REGISTER – Burial of the Dead**

*“Jesu mercy, Mary pray.”*

Letty Ray Church Quarry, aged 97, died 8 February 2010, fortified by the Rites of the Church. Burial from the Parish Church 13 February 2010.

### **ERRATUM AD MMIX**

**RIP** Agnes Correia Riddick, aged 94, died February 23, 2009, buried 28 February 2009 from the Parish Church.

## POPE BENEDICT XVI'S ASH WEDNESDAY HOMILY

*"Lent Lengthens Our Horizon, It Orients Us to Eternal Life"*

*You love all creatures, Lord, and do not loath anything you have made;  
You forget the sins of those who convert and forgive them, because you are the Lord our God.*

With this moving invocation, taken from the Book of Wisdom (cf 11:23-26), the liturgy introduces the Eucharistic celebration of Ash Wednesday. They are words that, in some way, open the whole Lenten journey, placing as their foundation the omnipotence of the love of God, his absolute lordship over every creature, which is translated in infinite indulgence, animated by a constant and universal will to live. In fact, to forgive someone is equivalent to saying: I do not want you to die, but that you live; I always and only want your good.

This absolute certainty sustained Jesus during the 40 days transpired in the desert of Judea, after the baptism received from John in the Jordan. This long time of silence and fasting was for him a complete abandonment to the Father and to his plan of love; it was a "baptism," that is, an "immersion" in his will, and in this sense, an anticipation of the Passion and the Cross. To go into the desert and to stay there a long time, alone, meant to be willingly exposed to the assaults of the enemy, the tempter who made Adam fall and through whose envy death entered the world (cf Wisdom 2:24); it meant engaging in open battle with him, defying him with no other weapons than limitless confidence in the omnipotent love of the Father. Your love suffices me, my food is to do your will (cf John 4:34): This conviction dwelt in the mind and heart of Jesus during that "Lent" of his. It was not an act of pride, a titanic enterprise, but a decision of humility, consistent with the Incarnation and the Baptism in the Jordan, in the same line of obedience to the merciful love of the Father, who "so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16).

The Lord did all this for us. He did it to save us and, at the same time, to show us the way to follow him. Salvation, in fact, is a gift, it is God's grace, but to have effect in my existence it requires my consent, an acceptance demonstrated in deeds, that is, in the will to live like Jesus, to walk after him. To follow Jesus in the Lenten desert is, hence, the condition necessary to participate in his Easter, in his "exodus." Adam was expelled from the earthly Paradise, symbol of communion with God; now, to return to that communion and, therefore, to true life, it is necessary to traverse the desert, the test of faith. Not alone, but with Jesus! He -- as always -- has preceded us and has already conquered in the battle against the spirit of evil. This is the meaning of Lent, liturgical time that every year invites us to renew the choice to follow Christ on the path of humility to participate in his victory over sin and death.

Understood in this perspective also is the penitential sign of the ashes, which are imposed on the head of those who begin with good will the Lenten journey. It is essentially a gesture of humility, which means: I recognize myself for what I am, a frail creature, made of earth and destined to the earth, but also made in the image of God and destined to him. Dust, yes, but loved, molded by love, animated by his vital breath, capable of recognizing his voice and of responding to him; free and, because of this, also capable of disobeying him, yielding to the temptation of pride and self-sufficiency. This is sin, the mortal sickness that soon entered to contaminate the blessed earth that is the human being. Created in the image of the Holy and Righteous One, man lost his own innocence and he can now return to be righteous only thanks to the righteousness of God, the righteousness of love that -- as St. Paul writes -- was manifested "through faith in Jesus Christ" (Romans 3:22). From these words of the Apostle I took my inspiration for my Message, addressed to all the faithful on the occasion of this Lent: a reflection on the theme of righteousness in the light of the Sacred Scriptures and of its fulfillment in Christ.

Also very present in the biblical readings of Ash Wednesday is the theme of righteousness. First of all, the page of the prophet Joel and the Responsorial Psalm -- the Miserere -- form a penitential diptych, which manifests how at the origin of all material and social injustice is what the Bible calls "iniquity," that is, sin, which consists essentially in a disobedience to God, namely, a lack of love. "For I know my transgressions, / and my sin is ever before me. / Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, / and done that which is evil in thy sight" (Psalm 51 (50): 3-4). The first act of righteousness, therefore, is to recognize one's own iniquity, it is to recognize that it is rooted in the "heart," in the very center of the human person. "Fasting," "weeping", "mourning" (cf. Joel 2:12) and every penitential expression has value in the eyes of God only if it is the sign of truly repentant hearts. Also the Gospel, taken from the "Sermon on the Mount," insists on the need to practice proper "righteousness" -- almsgiving, prayer and fasting -- not before men but only in the eyes of God, who "sees in secret" (cf Matthew 6:1-6.16-18). The true "recompense" is not others' admiration, but friendship with God and the grace that derives from it, a grace that gives strength to do good, to love also the one who does not deserve it, to forgive those who have offended us.

The second reading, Paul's appeal to allow ourselves to be reconciled with God (cf 2 Corinthians 5:20), contains one of the famous Pauline paradoxes, which redirects the whole reflection on righteousness to the mystery of Christ. St.

Paul writes: "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). In the heart of Christ, that is, in the center of his divine-human Person, the whole drama of liberty was at stake in decisive and definitive terms. God took to the extreme consequences his own plan of salvation, remaining faithful to his love even at the cost of giving his Only-begotten Son to death, and to death on a cross. As I wrote in the Lenten Message, "here divine righteousness is revealed, profoundly different from the human. [...] Thanks to Christ's action, we can enter the 'greatest' righteousness, which is that of love (cf Romans 13:8-10)."

Dear brothers and sisters, Lent lengthens our horizon, it orients us to eternal life. On this earth we are on pilgrimage, "[f]or here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come," says the Letter to the Hebrews (Hebrews 13:14). Lent makes us understand the relativity of the goods of this earth and thus makes us capable of the necessary self-denials, free to do good. Let us open the earth to the light of heaven, to the presence of God in our midst. Amen.

### **STEWARDSHIP UPDATE**

Dear Friends in Christ:

In the grey darkness of mid-February, I am pleased to report on several rays of light that are shining within our community. The first is that, having successfully subscribed our \$85,000 pledge goal for 2010, we are now actually fulfilling it! As of this writing, we are within a few dollars of expected pledge income for the first two months of the year. A hearty "Well done!" to all who are supporting the pledge campaign this year.

An additional "bright beam" is that the replacement of the Guild Hall roof should begin by the time this issue of the Evangelist reaches you. Once completed, we won't have to place trash cans strategically around the floor of the Hall to catch the streams of rainwater! This work is possible primarily through the beneficence of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Faith, whose generous gift in December made it possible to enter into a contract with Manchester Roofing.

Despite these bright pieces of news, however, we all need to remain aware that our budget for 2010 contains a very large hole – a deficit of more than \$35,000. The Vestry and staff have undertaken significant spending reductions to lower this number, but cost-cutting alone will not close the gap. We must increase revenues, and we must do so immediately if we are to see our way to a fiscally balanced 2010. These revenue increases must come from a variety of sources; rental income, dinners, fairs, as well as increased plate and pledge offering.

*It is important that we think as a family.* As a family, we have a financial problem. As a family, working together, we can solve this problem – but it will require the participation of every member of the community. If each of us gives according to our various abilities, we can not only close the budget gap, but we will thrive in our mission to do God's work in this place.

Prayerfully consider what your additional offering to God through S. John's might be. I commend to your attention the close of Pope Benedict's Lenten Homily, printed elsewhere in this Evangelist: "Lent makes us understand the relativity of the goods of this earth and thus makes us capable of the necessary self-denials, free to do good."

Together, let us do good.

Yours in Christ,  
*Jono Babbitt*

**FRIENDS OF S. JOHN'S**  
**OUR THANKS TO:**  
**MARY VAN PELT, NEW YORK, NY, \$50**

***WON'T YOU CONSIDER JOINING THE FRIENDS IN THEIR SUPPORT OF OUR MISSION HERE IN NEWPORT?***

## TEST YOUR CHURCH KNOWLEDGE

Here is a short Quiz, taken from The Catholic Quiz Book, published by Gracewing in the United Kingdom. We can always learn more about our history, the Sacraments, Biblical knowledge, etc. See how much you remember from instruction. Answers in next month's Evangelist.

1. Easter Day is a movable feast; by what lunar calculation is its celebration decided?
2. How many Beatitudes are there in S. Matthew's Gospel?
3. In an opera Mozart wrote during the same year that he composed his *Requiem Mass*, he celebrated the Masonic alternative to the Mass of the Church. What was the opera?
4. When, to the nearest century, did the Eastern and Western Churches last excommunicate each other?
5. What four disasters do the four Horsemen of the Apocalypse represent?
6. When does the First Sunday of Advent fall?
7. Which saint, beheaded in Verulamium around 209 AD, is considered the first British martyr?
8. What prayer, announced by a bell, is repeated three times a day, morning, noon and evening, in honour of the Incarnation?
9. Name the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary.
10. What is the sixth Sunday in Lent called?
11. What is the plate that holds the Host during Mass called?
12. What is a Triduum?
13. Which three of the sacraments can only be administered once validly?
14. Who baptized St Augustine (of Hippo)?
15. What is the shawl worn by the priest when holding the monstrance for benediction or in a procession called?
16. What is the prolongation of a festival for eight days called?
17. When Andrew asked Jesus where he lived, what did Jesus answer?
18. What is the Sunday after Easter called?
19. Who first uttered the words *Nunc dimittis*?
20. In what year did the Oxford Movement in the Church of England begin: 1829, 1833, 1845, 1846?

### A READING FOR PASSIONTIDE BY S. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM (c. 347-407)

Have you considered the nature of the wonderful victory that is ours? Have you considered the glorious deeds of the Cross? Let me tell you how the victory was won and you will be even more amazed. Christ conquered the devil using the very means by which the devil conquered us: Christ took up the weapons with which the devil had fought, and defeated him. Listen now to how it was achieved.

If you reflect upon the Scriptures and the story of our redemption, you will recall that a virgin, a tree and a death were the symbols of our defeat. The virgin's name was Eve: she knew not a man. The tree was the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The death was Adam's penalty. But now those very symbols of our defeat – a virgin, a tree and a death – have become symbols of Christ's victory. In place of Eve there is Mary; in place of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, there is the tree of the Cross; and in place of the death of Adam, there is the death of Christ.

Can you now see how the very circumstances in which the devil conquered us have become the pattern of his own defeat? At the foot of the tree the devil overcame Adam; at the foot of the tree Christ vanquished the devil. As a result of the first tree humankind were consigned to Hades; now a second Adam calls back to life even those who had already descended there. The first tree hid a man who knew himself to have been undermined and stripped bare; the second tree displays the naked victor for all the world to see. The first death condemned those who were born after it; but this second death gives life even to those who were born before it. Who can describe sufficiently the mighty deeds of the Lord? For by his death we have become immortal. Such are the glorious deeds of the Cross.

Have you now understood the victory? Have you grasped how it was achieved? Remember, the victory was gained without any effort or work on our part. No weapons of ours were stained with blood. We were not in the front line of the battle, nor were we wounded or the object of aggression. And yet we have obtained the victory. The battle was the Lord's, but the crown is ours. Since then the victory is ours, let us imitate victorious soldiers and sing a song of victory with great joy. Let us praise the Lord and say: 'Death is swallowed up in victory! O death, where is your victory? O death where is your sting?'

My dear people, the Cross has achieved all these wonderful things for us. The Cross is a war memorial erected against the demons, a sword raised against sin, the sword with which Christ slew the serpent. The Cross is the Father's will, the glory of the only-begotten, and the Spirit's exaltation. It is the beauty of angels and the guardian of the Church. Paul gloried in the Cross of Christ, for it is indeed the rampart of the saints and the light of the whole world.