

## TIDINGS

OF HOLY NAME OF JESUS NATIONAL CATHOLIC PARISH

A Monthly Newsletter of Information and Events

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### Ours is not to question why ... Why?

As I have been mentioning, we will be focusing on the sacrament of the Word of God during this centennial year of our unique sacrament.

There is a well documented human tendency to be biased toward what is our own. Two years ago Malcolm Gladwell turned this science into a best-seller with his book *Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking*. In a democratic church such as ours where all the baptized are vested with authority, this bias must be acknowledged.

As mentioned previously, the structure of our church administration was based on that of the United States government. The Founding Fathers were wise enough to not replace the dictatorship of the monarch with that of the people. Minority rights would be respected and fundamental liberties could not be threatened no matter how large the majority. To protect our church democracy from similar degradation, we invoked the gifts of grace and inspiration as part of our governing process. The US Constitution has super-majorities and judicial review. Our church has the sacrament of the Word of God Heard and Preached.

Invocation prayers preceded all of our meetings asking that the unseen presence of God's Spirit would speak through our consensus-decisions. And by our Second General Synod in 1909, our church had promulgated a new sacrament, the Word of God Heard and Preached. The biblical Word of God itself, its proclamation and importantly its reception were all judged to merit the highest esteem the church could offer: the designation of sacrament. The Word and its interpretation would be our inviolable standard which would guide our decisions as church. So that our democracy could not trump this fundamental principle, we recognized that all of our members needed to be constantly exposed to God's Word, and it was elevated to sacrament so that all would respect its authority. The sacrament of the Word of God was our answer to the reality of human bias and its potential to turn our church democracy away from the consensus born of the Spirit's inspiration. Through this sacrament, we hope to

implement God's revelation rather than our own bias in the teachings and praxis of our church.

An important facet of this sacrament is found in contradistinction to the fundamentalist perspective. Those who insist on reading the Bible literally due to their reverence for God's Word lock its inspiration in the past. God spoke in the past; it was infallibly and inalterably recorded in the past; and the present is forever trying to recreate the past. This tacitly denies the personal and social contributions that have affected the expression of God's Word. Muslims may believe that the Koran is a literal transcript of God's voice who spoke in Aramaic to Mohammed, and which therefore may never be translated so that it is not contaminated by human influence, but the Bible knows no such proscription. Juxtaposed in Paul's writing is a command attributed to "not I but the Lord," and which is followed by another described as from "I and not the Lord." (1 Cor. 7:10, 12) Both are inspired and both are part of the biblical Word of God. And the clearest example of the Bible's historical and psychological influences on the Word of God is expressed as the four Gospels. There is one life-story told from four separate perspectives.

The Bible is alive with the presence of God in His Word. Its contents are now unchangeable, but its meaning has always been dependent upon the Spirit's inspiration of those who convey and receive it. We are indebted to the past as the source of the written word, but we are not limited to the past because the Spirit is a part of the present. Bp. Hodur expressed this sentiment in the *Eleven Great Principles* when he wrote: "When [a priest of the National Catholic Church] interprets, simplifies, extends and sounds its [the Word of God] depth, according to the needs of the time, he is fulfilling the highest duty attainable by man, for he is proclaiming the will of God, the laws which are eternal, holy and creative."

This living and ever-present Word of God is the basis of the sacrament, and the sacrament is the basis for our trust that our church democracy will reflect the current voice of God among us.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS  
MONTH OF APRIL

- April 1, 2009 – Ecumenical Lenten Discussion Group will meet at the Conway Congregational Church at 7PM, Rev. Richard Killough presenter. Anniversary of birth of Bp. Francis Hodur, organizer of our church denomination (1866).
- April 3<sup>rd</sup> – Monthly visitations to the sick and the shut-in of the parish.  
Stations of the Cross will be recited at 7:00pm.
- April 4<sup>th</sup> – **EASTER FOOD SALE** from 9:00am – 2:00pm in the parish hall.  
Confession for the youth of the parish at 10:30am  
Acolyte practice for Palm Sunday at 11:00am.
- April 5<sup>th</sup> – **PALM SUNDAY**. Blessing and distribution of the palms, celebration of the holy Mass at 9:00am.  
Organizational meeting for our Chicken BBQ following Mass.  
There will be NO Polish Mass this Sunday.
- April 7<sup>th</sup> – Holy Tuesday. Diocesan Mass of Christm celebrated by Bp. Gnat at 4:00pm at Norwich, CT.
- April 8<sup>th</sup> – Holy Wednesday. The Bitter Lamentations Lenten Devotion will be sung at 7:00pm. This will be followed by General Confession for the congregation.
- April 9<sup>th</sup> – **HOLY THURSDAY**. Mass and liturgy of the day at 6:00pm. This will be followed by a potluck dinner after church in the parish hall.
- April 10<sup>th</sup> – **GOOD FRIDAY**. The church will be open throughout the day for moments of private prayer and meditation.  
The Youth Stations of the Cross will be read at 4:00pm.  
The Mass of the Pre-Sanctified will be offered at 7:00pm.
- April 11<sup>th</sup> – **HOLY SATURDAY**. Liturgy of blessings and readings will begin at 8:00am.  
Easter foods will be blessed in homes by invitation.  
Easter foods will be blessed in church at 5:00pm.
- April 12<sup>th</sup> – **EASTER SUNDAY**. Resurrection procession and celebration of the holy Mass at 9:00am.  
Children's Easter activity will follow Mass.
- April 13<sup>th</sup> – **Bible study group** will begin its new season of study at 7:00pm in the parish hall.
- April 14<sup>th</sup> – Monthly meeting of the Parish Committee at 7:00pm.

- April 26<sup>th</sup> – Monthly meeting of the Adoration Society at 10:00am.
- April 28<sup>th</sup> – Bible study group will meet in the parish hall at 7:00pm.

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**EASTER FOOD SALE**

On April 4<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am – 2:00pm the parish will conduct her annual Easter Food Sale in the parish hall. We turn to all of our members to share their kitchen specialties with us at this time. Your reputations precede you and people come from far and wide because of your culinary treats. This is an important fundraiser for the parish and anything that you can do to help is appreciated.

Volunteers will be gathering in the days prior to the food sale to make apple pies and golumpki. If you can help with the pies, please speak with Marge Sanderson. If you can help with the golumpki, please talk to Jane Grybko or Theresa Boron. Again, thank you for your help.

**HOLY WEEK**

Holy Week begins with **Palm Sunday**. The liturgy of this day recalls the triumphal procession of Jesus into Jerusalem. According to John 12:13 the people of Jerusalem cut palm branches to lay on the road before Jesus as a sign of honour. In recognition of this event, the palms will be blessed and shared with the faithful. However, from our perspective of history, we know that the cries of “Hosanna” (“save, we pray”) quickly degrade to calls of “Crucify Him!” In a most powerful liturgy, the celebrant takes the blessed palms and strikes the crucified Jesus three times in anticipation of what will follow during Holy Week.

On Holy Tuesday, Fr. Calvo will travel to Norwich, CT to participate with Bp. Gnat and other diocesan clergy in the blessing of oils. These oils are used throughout the year in the various sacramental rites of the church.

Following the singing of the Bitter Lamentations on **Holy Wednesday**, a full sacramental Confession will be administered to the adults present in church. This prepares us spiritually for the grave and momentous events that are to follow.

**Holy Thursday** commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus and His arrest at Gethsemane. On this night when Jesus instituted the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist and told His followers, “Do this in remembrance of me,” we do exactly that. We gather together in the new Upper Room of the church and share in Jesus’ blessed presence

through the sacrament of the altar. However, this is also the night of the scandal of Jesus' arrest. As He is forcibly taken away by His enemies to be interrogated and tortured, we transfer the Blessed Sacrament to the Altar of Repose and then disrupt the remainder of the sanctuary. The tabernacle door is left ajar to symbolize the power of the profane. Candles are tipped on their side, linens disheveled, and the eternal light extinguished.

So that as many parishioners as possible may receive the Holy Eucharist on this night by keeping the two-hour fast, Mass will be offered at 6:00pm and will then be followed by a potluck supper in the parish hall immediately following the night's liturgy. A sign-up sheet will be available at church for those interested in attending the supper.

The church will be open throughout the day from 7 AM until at least 9 PM on **Good Friday** so that the faithful may enter this quiet and sacred place on the day that Jesus dies. Good Friday should be treated differently than any other day. The thought of the crucified God should change our regular routines. Fasting is required. If you can, turn off televisions and radios for the day. I promise your heads will not explode. Give the day the quiet and the solemnity that God deserves.

The young people of the parish will read their Stations of the Cross at 4:00pm after they are released from school. The stirring Mass of the Pre-Sanctified will be offered at 7:00pm. No other liturgy of the church-year resembles this night's offering. All believers should make their best effort to be in church on Good Friday.

On **Holy Saturday** we prepare ourselves and the church for the glories of the resurrection. Jesus foretold His victory over death on the third day. In hope and trust, we wait and prepare. Fire is blessed and new light is brought into the church, prophecies of the new creation are read, and water, the symbol of new life, is blessed, as well.

Easter foods will be blessed in the homes of the faithful by invitation, and again in church at 5 PM. A flier is available at church for new-comers to this tradition. This practice carries the sanctity of the church's liturgy into our homes. As we break our Lenten fasts after Easter Mass, we do so with food that has been blessed in the name of the resurrected Saviour and whose very substance symbolizes the promises of the resurrection. I

hope that many of our parishioners will choose to take advantage of this special Easter tradition.

As you can see, the liturgies of Holy Week flow together as a beautiful whole. To gain an appreciation of the mystery that the church draws from and shares, I invite you to attend all of these gatherings so that you may touch the power of Holy Week.

#### **EASTER**

Easter is the most solemn and sacred day in the life of the church. The tomb is empty! Jesus' followers and even adversaries agreed to this fact. Our liturgy takes us to that moment when the Beloved Disciple saw and believed. Come as the people of God to celebrate this wonder, this joyful promise fulfilled. Share in the glory of the resurrection by coming to Jesus on this day and sharing in the Good News that He lives!

After Mass a children's activity will be hosted by the Parish Mission Team. Cupcakes and juice will be served in conjunction with a coffee hour for the adults. The Mission Team hopes our young families will stay for a while after church and join in the fun. This is all open to your friends and family as well so share an invitation.

#### **EASTER FLOWER FUND**

If you would like to make a memorial contribution to the Easter Flower Fund, you may send in your contribution to the rectory, give it directly to Fr. Calvo or place it in a clearly marked envelope in the Sunday collection basket. These donations will be acknowledged in the church bulletin at Easter. Your donations allow the church to adorn the Sanctuary with the lilies that have become such a beautiful part of our Easter traditions. Thank you for your generosity.

#### **BIBLE STUDY GROUP**

Our ecumenical Bible study group will re-convene on Easter Monday at 7:00pm in the parish hall. We will continue with our reading of Matthew's Gospel. We meet on alternate weeks for one hour, which translates into only about two hours a month. If you may be looking for a way to open up the Bible in a more profound way, why not think about joining our group. No prior Bible knowledge is required. We are very informal. All that is needed is a desire to know more about that book that sits on all of our shelves. Please remember that this group is open to non-members of the parish as well. If you know someone who may like to come and join us, please feel free to invite them to come with you.

## Be a Part of Our Celebration

In 1909 the members of this church gathered in holy synod and together they created a new sacrament: The Sacrament of the Word of God. This sacrament elevates the revealed Word of God in the Bible and its expression in the sermon to the highest dignity the church can confer. This year we celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this historically sacred event. In keeping with its themes of Bible, church and especially the voice of all our members, we are seeking out your voice.

Is there a particular parable, story or verse in the Bible that has captured your attention? Has something about our church especially inspired you? Could you express it in art, poetry or narrative? We are looking for how you as a child, a student, a young parent, a veteran, a School of Christian Living teacher, a lay reader, an Adoration Society member, a Parish Committee officer, an acolyte, a member of the choir, a faithful parishioner, a clergyman, how do you respond to the real presence in the sacrament of the Word of God?

Our organizer, Bp. Francis Hodur, was a creative soul. He penned plays, books and pamphlets. He composed church hymns and liturgies. He appreciated the power of the written and the spoken word through his articles in church publications and his sermons. The inspiration of his creativity was his faith. How has your faith inspired you? How has the Word of God touched you? Your submissions will then become the basis of this summer's annual Prayer Service at the Cathedral of the Pines in Rindge, NH. For this reason, we are asking that you submit your works by **April 15<sup>th</sup>** to:

**Fr. Randolph Calvo / 15 Thayer Street / S. Deerfield, MA 01373-1136  
or [frrandy@holynamedeerfield.org](mailto:frrandy@holynamedeerfield.org).**

Along with celebrating the sacrament of the Word of God, the venue of the Cathedral of the Pines calls us to solemn prayers for our veterans, military personnel, their families, and for peace. We will accept your donations on behalf of the *Military Child Education Coalition*, a recipient of the 2004 Congressional Club Charity of the Year, and also certified "Best in America" by the Independent Charities of America.

Please keep July 12<sup>th</sup> open so that you can be with us at the Cathedral of the Pines, but start thinking now about how you have been inspired by the Word of God and how you can express it for the rest of us. We hope to hear from you by April 15<sup>th</sup>. Of course, you may submit your materials anonymously if you would prefer.