

TIDINGS

OF HOLY NAME OF JESUS NATIONAL CATHOLIC PARISH

A Monthly Newsletter of Information and Events

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Month of March

No. 3

Ours is not to question why ... Why?

In this year of the 100th anniversary of the sacrament of the Word of God, we will spend time on this page discussing our unique sacrament. Last month's article finished with mention of the human tendency to give preferential consideration to what is ours even if what is ours is not up to the challenge. We are biased in our thinking, even if subconsciously, by this predisposition. The remedy is to foster engaged inquiry so that we do not rely on untested assumptions or unfounded premises. When this rationale is translated into a church reformation setting, such as ours, the importance of the sacrament of the Word of God becomes further illuminated.

As our church called into question the assumptions and the premises that had defined Catholic identity, it was almost inevitable that something like the sacrament of the Word of God would emerge because we differentiated ourselves as a *free* Catholic church. To this aim we organized ourselves in imitation of the American political system. A recent convert to our church remarked to Bp. Peplowski: "The PNCC is a Catholic Church that is so American in its polity and government – the ideal church that many of us are looking for." (*Acts*, 2-4/2009) July 4th is recognized as a religiously important holiday, and the day chosen on which the Scranton church was dedicated. Most importantly of all, the entire church body has been empowered with the guidance of our church. In our Catholic democracy all members of the church collaborate in directing our reformation. As such all must be informed of and by God's inspired revelation, His Word.

At the beginning of this year several Roman Catholic parishes in Western Massachusetts were closed. The rationale offered is too few priests and parishioners, and too many expensive buildings. Many of the parishioners of these churches, however, have not accepted the rationale. Some parishes, such as St. Stanislaus Koska parish in Adams, have established vigils at their churches in an attempt to keep them open. Some times the bishop will relent, other times no.

In Boston nine vigils were held at nine parishes. Four have since been reopened; five have maintained the vigils. There is no hard and fast rule.

If you know the history of our church, you know that the lay organizers of our Scranton parish similarly hoped that the bishop would recognize their un-sanctioned church once it was constructed and staffed; you know that Fr. Hodur was called from a Nanticoke, PA parish that also began as an un-sanctioned effort that was subsequently accepted by the bishop. The similarities with the vigil-parishes of today are obvious. And the comparisons continue. St. Frances Parish in Scituate, MA is not far from marking the 2,000th day of their vigil. The parishioners who have dedicated themselves to this cause have been transformed by it. The *New York Times* reported: "Many of the St. Frances holdouts describe being transformed from passive Catholics to passionate, deeply involved members of a spiritual community ..." (1/6/09, A14) One parishioner said she was unable to return to the "prince-of-the-church" hierarchical structure. She stated she would always be Catholic, but not as in her past. She would insist on the privilege of responsibility as part of her worship.

This is a repetition of our transformative story. The emergence of an engaged and empowered membership changed the commitment and beliefs of the parishioners involved. Both then and now parishioners went from passive to passionate with the catalyst being their responsible engagement in church affairs. We are witnessing first hand the transformation that led to the birth and continuing purpose of our church. Our people struggled to build a new denomination so that this passion could be maintained. They insisted on the right of informed involvement. Within 12 years this would lead to the elevation of the teaching sacrament, the Word of God, to the highest dignity the church could bestow. An informed membership rather than an obedient one defined our piety. The question before us now pertains to the bias exemplified by "nostrum." Are we still passionate enough to question what is our own?

CALENDAR OF EVENTS
MONTH OF MARCH

- March 1, 2009 – Polish Mass will be recited at 7:45am.
- March 4th – Ecumenical Lenten Series at 7:00pm at the Whately Congregational Church.
- March 6th – Monthly visitations to the sick and the shut-in of the parish
Stations of the Cross will be recited at 7:00pm.
- March 7th – Confession for the youth of the parish at 10:30am.
Remember to set your clocks AHEAD one hour before retiring for the night.
- March 8th – **FEAST OF THE INSTITUTION**. Mass at 9:00am.
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING in the parish hall at 10:00am.
- March 10th – Monthly meeting of the Parish Committee at 7:00pm.
- March 11th – Ecumenical Lenten Series at 7:00pm at the Sunderland Congregational Church.
- March 12th – Meeting of the Parish Mission Team at 7:00pm in the parish hall.
- March 13th – Stations of the Cross will be recited at 7:00pm.
- March 18th – Ecumenical Lenten Series at 7:00pm at the South Deerfield Congregational Church.
- March 19th – Fr. Calvo will attend the accreditation meeting at the Frontier Regional High School at 11:30am.
- March 20th – The *Bitter Lamentations* will be sung at 7:00pm.
- March 25th – Ecumenical Lenten Series at 7:00pm at Holy Name of Jesus Church.
- March 27th – Stations of the Cross will be recited at 7:00pm.
- March 29th – **PASSION SUNDAY**. Mass at 9:00am.
Monthly meeting of the Adoration Society at 10:00am.
Central Seniorate Meal in the Upper Room at our parish at 4:00pm.

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“Some people regard discipline as a chore. For me, it is a kind of order that sets me free to fly.” - Julie Andrews

NEW MEMBERS

On behalf of the parish, I welcome Cindy Lajewski to Holy Name of Jesus, and also Marc Laurens, his wife Bridgette Sacco-Laurens and their daughter Mary. If someone you know does

not worship anywhere, think about inviting them to come with you to Holy Name of Jesus.

FEAST OF THE INSTITUTION

On the second Sunday of March 1897, Bp. Hodur accepted the pastorate of the newly formed St. Stanislaus Parish in Scranton, PA. This event has come to be recognized as the beginning of the National Catholic denomination for from this one parish our church has spread out from New York to California, from Florida to Canada. We will take a short break from our Lenten regimen on this Sunday and celebrate our church's birthday. Flowers will return to the altar, the Gloria will be heard, and the purple shrouds will disappear. In this our 112th year, we remember our origins so that we may continue to strive to fulfill our calling as a democratic, reforming Catholic church. I hope that you will choose to be with us at Mass on this unique feast day of ours.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

In keeping with the theme of the Feast of the Institution, we will conduct our Annual Congregational Meeting after Mass. We will practice what we preach. We will act upon our belief in church democracy by reporting to the congregation on what we have done and plan to do, hold elections, and ask the body to vote its pleasure on matters pertaining to our church. All adult members in good standing of Holy Name of Jesus are invited and encouraged to attend and participate in this meeting.

LENT

Lent is the 40 day period that precedes the mystery of Easter (Lenten Sundays are not counted as part of the 40 days for Sundays always celebrate the resurrection and are not formally counted as days of Lenten penance).

Once again this year we will join our Congregational neighbours as we gather for our **Ecumenical Lenten Discussion Series**. The full schedule is attached to the newsletter. These gatherings offer all of us an opportunity to hear different perspectives on a Lenten theme, and to then discuss it among ourselves. Lent should be a time of spiritual growth. We should approach closer to Jesus during these 40 days. We should strive to be a changed people so that by Easter we have grown in our faith. If nothing has changed, then Lent has not met its expectations. I hope you will think about using these discussions as one vehicle to spur spiritual development. Plus, it is a nice time

to meet with our neighbours, join them in their churches, and welcome them to ours.

During Lent we are called upon to **fast**. All Lenten Fridays are days when we are not to eat meat, and days on which our meals are to be simple. This practice is to remind believers of Jesus' sacrifice for us upon the cross on Good Friday. For those who keep the Friday fast all year, Wednesday is added during Lent as a fast day.

We will conduct our **Lenten Devotions** every Lenten Friday at 7:00pm. The *Bitter Lamentations* will be sung on March 20th and April 8th. The *Stations of the Cross* will be recited March 6th, 13th, 27th and April 3rd. These devotions are designed to help us meditate upon the suffering and death of our Saviour. Very few of us take advantage of these special times of prayer in the church. I hope you will help us change that fact.

MEAL IN THE UPPER ROOM

The Central Seniorate's *Meal in the Upper Room* will be hosted by our parish this year. It will take place on Passion Sunday, March 29th, at 4:00pm. This annual event is a reenactment of Jesus' Last Supper with His apostles. Fr. Sen. Soltysiak and Fr. Sen. Banas read the words of institution, and others in attendance read various biblical selections and other readings. A lamb stew meal is eaten in silence to help us contemplate what it may have been like 2,000 years ago when Jesus and His followers gathered in the Upper Room of Jerusalem. A sign-up sheet is posted in the church vestibule for those who would like to attend from our parish.

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. Also, general donations will be accepted after Sunday Masses beginning on March 15th. Your donations in either form 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.

EASTER FOOD SALE RAFFLE

Our Easter Food Sale Raffle will take place on Saturday, April 4th. In preparation, we are soliciting donations of food and/or pantry items so

that we can assemble gift baskets from them. All donations need to be brought to church by March 22nd. This will allow Lynnette Poe to assemble the gift baskets. Raffle donations cannot be accepted after the 22nd. Thank you for your generosity.

NEW BRANCH OF THE PNU?

In the recent past Eleanor Sadoski and Fr. Francis Niemiec have served our parish as local PNU Branch Secretaries. The Home Office has asked that we form a new branch here in South Deerfield to continue the services of these past officers. If you would like to serve as our local Branch Secretary, which does involve financial incentives, please speak with Fr. Calvo.

A local branch would be well worth our effort. Deposits in the Credit Union are insured by the Federal government for each account up to a quarter of a million dollars. Interest rates vary, but as of mid-February checking and savings accounts were paying 1.5%, 6 month CD's 3.25%. Home loans were offered at 4.25% and car loans at 4.5%. And what makes all of this attractive for members in Western Massachusetts is that they have started internet banking at www.spojniacreditunion.org. Your account is only a click away.

The PNU is a not-for-profit organization. As such it has not been involved in the financial mess that is threatening many larger banks. As a fraternal organization it exists "to serve [her] members and [is] well capitalized at nearly 12 percent. Credit unions have always made prudent lending decisions and continue to approve loans for all their members' financial needs." Also, as a fraternal, her profits are reinvested with her members, and the PNU has consistently been one of the largest donors to our church. For all these reasons I hope you will think about joining the PNU or even serving as an officer.

PARISH MISSION TEAM

The Parish Mission Team will meet on Thursday, March 12th at 7:00pm. Our main order of business will be plans for Easter Sunday. We had a wonderful response to our efforts on Christmas, and now it is time to look ahead to Easter. We will also need to discuss our plans for the children of the church and our Easter activity with them. If you would like to share your thoughts with us, please accept this invitation to come and join our Mission Team.

2009 - Twelfth Annual Ecumenical Lenten Lecture Series - 2009

Why would anyone want to be a Christian when nobody seems to care?

February 25th (Ash Wednesday)

Participants invited to Mass at Holy Name of Jesus Church at 7PM
Homily and first session offered by Rev. Sherril Willis at 8PM
Session Title: *I am the tax-collector*

March 4th

Second session offered by Fr. Randy Calvo (Please note change in schedule)
At the Whately Congregational Church at 7PM
Session Title: *Because we owe it to Him*

March 11th

Third session offered by Rev. Candice Ashenden (Please note change in schedule)
At the Sunderland Congregational Church at 7PM
Session Title: *Never wrestle with a pig in mud (What happens when we play by two different sets of rules)*

March 18th

Fourth session offered by Rev. Cynthia Crosson-Harrington
At the South Deerfield Congregational Church at 7PM
Session Title: *Mark Twain (No, not the author!)*

March 25th

Fifth session offered by Rev. Barbara Seamon
At Holy Name of Jesus Church at 7PM
Session Title: *Good things about bad times (Phil 2:5-11; Isa 40)*

April 1st

Sixth session offered by Rev. Richard Killough
At the Conway United Congregational Church at 7PM
Session Title: *What's true: Many find no God in modern Christianity, or many in Christianity have no God to share with modern seekers?*

Refreshment will be served after each gathering by the host parish. Since Holy Name of Jesus Church is hosting a second time on March 25th all parishes are asked to bring some refreshment at that time.

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 100th 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 15th** to:

**Fr. Randolph Calvo / 15 Thayer Street / S. Deerfield, MA 01373-1136
or 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 12th 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 15th. Of course, you may submit your materials anonymously if you would prefer.