

TIDINGS

OF HOLY NAME OF JESUS NATIONAL CATHOLIC PARISH

A Monthly Newsletter of Information and Events

Vol. 21 – 2008

Month of March

No. 3

SENSUS FIDEI

The date of Easter is determined by the first Sunday, after the first full moon, after the Spring Equinox. The first day of Spring is the 20th, the full moon is the very next day, and Easter is, therefore, the 23rd, which explains why it is so very early this year [The Orthodox Churches celebrate Easter according to the same formula but three weeks later due to a discrepancy between the Gregorian Calendar now in use and the ancient Julian Calendar which they still use to determine the date of Easter.]. Thus, Easter has always been associated with Spring. As a matter of fact, this is where its name originates. Eastre was the Norse goddess of Spring. Her name includes an allusion to the word *east*, and so she was also recognized as the goddess of the dawn. Being associated with both Spring and dawn, she eventually came to embody the theme of renewal in general.

It is not difficult to see how early European Christians, recent converts from pagan nature religions, could associate the feast of the resurrection with Eastre. She was the goddess of Spring and the dawn, and Easter is the Spring celebration of Jesus' resurrection as attested to by the empty tomb discovered "very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen." (Mark 16:2) Eastre's renewal was of nature while Jesus' renewal was more all-encompassing, but the connection is still obvious.

The same sort of thing probably happened in the Greek speaking Eastern Christianity when they chose to refer to the resurrection by the term the Jews used to refer to Passover [*Pascha*]. Greek was the first language of Christianity when her leaders still worshipped in the Temple and preached of Jesus to the Jews (Acts 5:42). This crossover terminology remains intact in the churches that descended from this early evangelism. *Pascha*, therefore, derives from the same missionary formula as *Easter*, but from a separate perspective.

Some very conservative Christians refrain from referring to the resurrection celebration as *Easter* because of its pagan background. But I wonder if they miss an important lesson when they do so.

When Christianity came to Northern Europe, as symbolized by the Eastre-Easter connection, she engaged the population in dialogue rather than enrage them with invective. Christianity took hold of what it held in common with these potential converts, and recognized the inchoate spirituality of the revelation these people had seen in nature (cf. Romans 1:20). It even respected that revelation enough to refer to its most sublime mystery of the resurrection as the eponymous descendent of its predecessor.

Similarly, archaeology has shown repeatedly that one religious tradition will build upon the foundations of its predecessor(s). [See for instance a recent article on one such example: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/05/science/05zeus.html?_r=1&scp=2&sq=&st=nyt&oref=slogin]

There is a tradition of respect for the religious instincts and sentiments of others even when they are being replaced. This goes back to the idea broached last month of *sensus fidei* (sense of faith). Just as all who are baptized receive a fundamental grace that empowers us in Christ, all humans as children of God have an instinctive connection with the divine.

Ignorance is the absence of information, and can be reversed by instruction. Ignorant, however, is the permanent veneration of this absence. It is the unwillingness to learn from others, be influenced by them, or respect their insight. The Taliban demolished the world's tallest Buddhist statues in Bamiyan seven years ago this month. They personify ignorant. It is the blind rejection and deprecation of all that is different. Ignorant cannot appreciate the most basic spiritual insight of any who are not vetted, sanctioned and given imprimatur.

There is a continuous history of religious adaptation whether it be Eastre, Pascha, or archaeology's myriad examples. The *sensus fidei* is not only a theological reality; it is a practical one. And if it has existed for as long as there has been religious thought and practice, one would be foolish to believe it non-existent today. There is a common wisdom that may whisper of revelation.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS
MONTH OF MARCH

- March 1, 2008 – Confession for the youth of the parish at 10:30am (This is the Confession for Holy Week and Easter).
- March 2nd – **FEAST OF THE INSTITUTION.**
There will be **no** Polish Mass this month.
Mass on the 111th anniversary of the organization of our church denomination at 9:00am.
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING at 10:00am.
- March 5th – Ecumenical Lenten Lecture at 7:00pm
- March 7th – Monthly visitations to the sick and the shut-in of the parish.
Lenten Devotion at 7:00pm.
- March 8th – Convo 2008 meeting in Webster at 11:00am, followed by a meeting of the diocesan Youth Commission.
Remember to set your clocks **AHEAD** one hour before retiring for the night.
- March 9th – **PASSION SUNDAY.** Mass at 9:00am.
The Central Seniorate Meal in the Upper Room will be hosted by the Westfield parish at 4:00pm.
- March 11th – Monthly meeting of the Parish Committee at 7:00pm.
- March 12th – Ecumenical Lenten Lecture at 7:00pm
- March 14th – Lenten Devotion at 7:00pm.
- March 15th – **EASTER FOOD SALE** in the parish hall from 9:00am – 2:00pm.
- March 16th – **PALM SUNDAY.** Blessing of the palms and Mass at 9:00am.
- March 18th – Diocesan Mass of Chrism in Lowell at 4:00pm.
- March 19th – Bitter Lamentations at 7:00pm, followed by General Confession for adults.
- March 20th – **HOLY THURSDAY.** Mass and liturgy of the day at 6:00pm, followed by a potluck dinner in the parish hall.
- March 21st – **GOOD FRIDAY.** The church will be open throughout the day for private prayer.
Youth Stations of the Cross at 4:00pm.
Mass of the Pre-Sanctified at 7:00pm.
- March 22nd – **HOLY SATURDAY.** Preparatory liturgies for Easter at 8:00am.
Easter foods will be blessed in the homes by invitation.
Easter foods will be blessed in church at 5:00pm.
- March 23rd – **EASTER SUNDAY.** Resurrection procession and Mass of the day at 9:00am.

March 30th – Monthly meeting of the Adoration Society at 10:00am.

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“Where are the disciples? Where are all those whom Jesus taught, fed and healed? – From Station of the Cross Fourteen
FEAST OF THE INSTITUTION

This year marks the 111th anniversary of the organization of our church denomination in Scranton, PA. In 1897, Fr. Francis Hodur accepted the pastorate of an independently formed parish named St. Stanislaus. Eventually, other like-minded reforming Catholic parishes would gravitate around this pastor and parish, thus beginning our denomination. Every year we mark this anniversary by taking down Lent’s purple and celebrating our church’s birthday. Flowers are returned to the altar and the Gloria is again recited. This year’s observance of the feast is moved earlier by one week from the traditional date of the second Sunday of the month. This is due to the early calendar date of Passion Sunday. I hope all of us National Catholics make a point of attending Mass on this special feast day of ours.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

As part of our observance of the Feast of the Institution, we will conduct our Annual Congregational Meeting. We were called into being as a church in order to combine Catholicism with democracy. The bedrock of our church’s democracy is the annual congregational meeting. We elect our officers, receive reports and plan for the future. It is the responsibility and privilege of all our members to participate in this gathering. If you have been asked by the Nominations Committee to serve the parish, please give the invitation serious consideration.

EASTER FOOD SALE

Every year on the Saturday before Palm Sunday the parish conducts an Easter Food Sale. This has become an important fund raiser for the parish. Volunteers make pierogi, golumpki and pies in the church kitchen, but we also turn to our parishioners and ask them to bring their own kitchen specialties to the sale, as well. I hope you will be able to help us. Thank you.

HOLY WEEK

Easter has not fallen this early on the calendar since 1913, but it is quickly coming upon us nonetheless. **Palm Sunday** is March 16th. This day commemorates Jesus’ triumphal entry into

Jerusalem. The citizens cut palm branches and placed them on the road before Jesus, hailing Him as "Son of David." Their enthusiasm was based on their own expectations and not on Jesus' self-revelation. Their cries of "Hosanna" would soon change to "Crucify Him!" This is all represented in the liturgy by the blessing of palms, the procession and finally the scourging of the cross.

On **Holy Wednesday**, after the singing of the Bitter Lamentations, a full sacramental Confession will be offered to the adults who are present. This is part of our spiritual preparation as we approach the days of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection.

Our liturgy on **Holy Thursday** commemorates the Last Supper with its institution of the Holy Eucharist, and also the capture of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. At the Last Supper Jesus said over the bread "This is my body" and over the wine "This is my blood." We remember this holy moment in which Jesus gives us Himself. This is also the day, however, when after the meal Jesus is captured by His enemies in the Garden of Gethsemane. To symbolize His abuse, the Blessed Sacrament is transferred to the side altar and then the rest of the Sanctuary is disrupted: candles are knocked over, linens disheveled, the tabernacle door left open, and the eternal light extinguished.

The Cathedral parish holds this liturgy and then a potluck dinner. In the hopes of increasing our attendance for this important liturgy, we will try the same this year. Mass will be at 6:00pm rather than 7:00pm, and then we will gather in the hall for a repast. I hope you will join us.

The church will be open from 7:00am until late in the evening on **Good Friday**, the day on which Jesus is crucified. Since our children are in school and others are at work, the Youth Stations will be held at 4:00pm, and the Mass of the Pre-Sanctified will begin at 7:00pm. Anyone who comes to church on Easter should understand why they need to be in church on Good Friday. If you cannot understand why, I probably cannot explain it. Mark this day as different, the day Jesus dies. Meals should be simple, homes quiet, maybe turn off televisions and radios for the day – I promise you will not implode. This is not a Friday for going out to eat or to the movies. Treat it differently because Jesus dies for us today.

On **Holy Saturday** the church gets herself ready for the Easter celebration. The necessary blessings

and readings will take place at 8:00am. If you would like your Easter foods blessed at home, please notify the rectory by Palm Sunday. Otherwise, Easter foods will be blessed in church at 5:00pm. If you are not familiar with this custom, an explanation flier is available in the vestibule.

EASTER

Easter is the holiest day of the church year, the day on which we celebrate Jesus' resurrection, and His defeat of death and sin. It is the promise of new beginnings and unexpected possibilities. The resurrection procession will begin at 9:00am, and will be followed by our Easter Sunday Mass. Due to the early date of Easter and the possibility of snow on the ground, our plans for the children after Mass have not yet been finalized, but information will be printed in the Weekly Bulletin as we get closer to the date. On this most joyous day of faith, I know you will want to be at Mass, and you may even wish to share your faith by inviting someone who has nowhere to worship to come with you to church on this most special occasion.

CHICKEN BARBECUE

This year we will be trying something new at our Chicken Barbecue. It will still be held the first Sunday of August at the same place – the Hatfield Lion's Club Pavilion. But ... this year we have hired a Polish band to play and we will have beer and wine for sale. The *Dennis Polisky and the Maestro's Men Band* will entertain us (<http://www.maestrosmen.com/index.html>).

The cost of hiring the band, obtaining a liquor license, insurance and police will greatly add to the parish's cost for running the barbecue, but it is hoped that our parishioners and friends will choose to spend the afternoon with us and enjoy good food, music and company. The cost for tickets that include the chicken barbecue dinner and the music will be \$15 for adults and \$5 for children, and tickets to come in and just hear the music will be sold for \$5.

We are going to need many more volunteers this year than previously. We will probably be selling more dinner tickets; we will also need extra help managing the traffic, selling tickets, serving the meal and beverages, and probably a whole lot more. To get a better grip on what this day entails we will be convening subcommittees on publicity, serving and raffle. If you can help in any of these ways, please speak to Don Skroski or Fr. Calvo. Thank you.

2008 - Eleventh Annual Ecumenical Lenten Lecture Series - 2008

Breaking Barriers - Creating Community
2 Corinthians 5:18

February 6th (Ash Wednesday)

Participants invited to Mass at Holy Name of Jesus Church at 7PM
Homily and first session offered by Rev. Richard Killough at 8PM

February 13th

Second session offered by Rev. Candice Ashenden
At the Sunderland Congregational Church at 7PM

February 20th

Third session offered by Rev. Sherril Willis
At the Whately Congregational Church at 7PM

February 27th

Fourth session offered by Rev. Cynthia Crosson-Harrington
At the Conway Congregational Church at 7PM

March 5th

Fifth session offered by Fr. Randy Calvo
At the South Deerfield Congregational Church at 7PM

March 12th

Sixth session offered by Rev. Will Sencabaugh
At the Sunderland Congregational Church at 7PM

Refreshments will be served after each gathering by the host parish. Since the Sunderland Church is hosting a second time on March 12th all parishes are asked to bring some refreshment at that time.

***** Please note location changes on 2/27 and 3/5 from last month's mailing. *****

FOOD SALE

Holy Name of Jesus needs your help! A major fund raiser, the pre-Easter food sale, is being held on

MARCH 15TH

9 AM – 2 PM

We hope you will contribute by preparing your favorite specialty.

Suggestions:

pies, cakes, cheesecakes, breads,
squares, cookies,
pickled eggs, homemade horse radish
or any other favorite.

Cash donations are also gratefully accepted.

Thank you!

Please bring your donations
to the church on

FRIDAY, MARCH 14TH