

BULLETIN



May 3, 2020 ~ Fourth Sunday of Easter

The Parish of St. Charles Borromeo, Resurrection and All Saints

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Bulletin for this week is found on the Parish website: sbrchurch.org. There is an obituary of Fr. Lawrence Lucas with this week's bulletin.
2. After checking in on our rectory staff and volunteers, I am glad to report that everyone is doing well.
3. Both of our food pantries at St. Charles & Resurrection Chapel have been still in operation disbursing out food to our communities. It is now becoming a little challenging because the companies that service us with the food deliveries are now not delivering food on a regular basis because of lack of food and manpower.
4. One of our seniors, Ms. Clara Bandinter from John Paul II has passed away this week. She attended many events held at St. Charles Church. Let us keep her Family in our prayers.
5. There will be a Prayer Service at 1pm EDT on Zoom. The ID is 834 8889 8246 the Password: 355608. If you call by phone the number is 646-558-8656.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CORNER: by Mark George, Pastoral Associate

A little fun for the family while on lockdown.

Rearrange the letters to find out the names of the **books of the Bible**... For example, 15. Mt. Wheat = Matthew

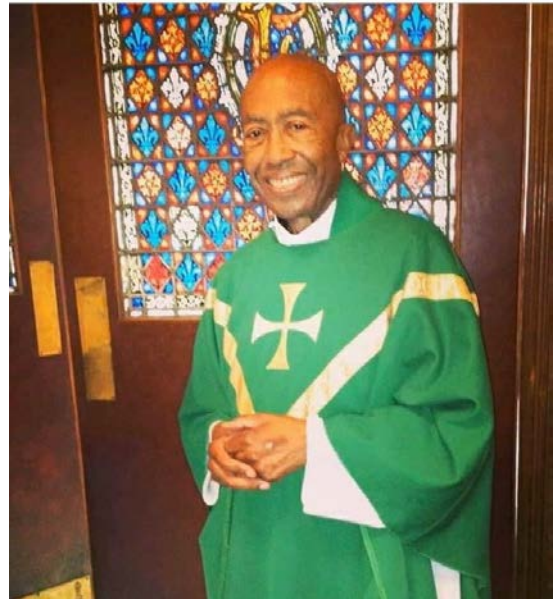
How many can you solve ... Ready ... Set ... Go ...

1. Used ox
2. Hi, mac
3. O, I had B.A.
4. Coins a loss
5. To my hit
6. Me, Saul
7. Metal nations
8. O, Sam
9. No Oslo fogs on 'M'
10. Cats
11. Sew herb
12. Money due to 'R'
13. Ben's rum
14. Threes
15. Mt. Wheat
16. Hurt
17. Raze
18. I select cases
19. A shoe
20. Shines on a salt

Fr. Lawrence Lucas (1933-2020)

By Fr. Gregory Chisholm, SJ

When Fr. Lawrence E. Lucas was ordained in 1959 at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City for the Archdiocese of New York he was only the third Black man to become a Catholic priest for New York. For many Black Americans, whether Catholic or not, this was an indication that change was afoot in the world, that yet another barrier to freedom had been dismantled, that great things would be expected of Lawrence Lucas. Malcolm X would have quite a different reaction when he met the young Seminarian Lucas on Harlem's Lenox Avenue. Malcolm X, when told by Lucas that he aspired to Catholic priesthood, asked him if he had "lost his g...damn mind."



Larry Lucas was son of Jamaican immigrants to the United States. His father died when Lucas was only 5 years old. So, he was raised in Harlem by his mother, who was deeply influenced in her own identity by Marcus Garvey. One does not have to go too far to appreciate that Malcolm X, whose own father was influenced by Garveyism, would be speaking sentiments completely intelligible to the soon to be Priest. Lucas was not ashamed of his African heritage. Like his forebears he understood himself to be one of a "mighty race." Self-determination would be a fundamental aspect of his attitude to ministry among persons of color. At the same time, he was also aware, very early in life, that the Catholic Church in America had grudging respect for people of African descent. At the age of six he could not enter the Catholic school across the street from his Harlem home because Black children were not allowed to enroll. In less than 10 years from his Priestly Ordination he would publicly call the American Catholic Church's practice, attitude, predisposition by the only name that made sense. In its behavior toward Black Americans the American Catholic Church reveals itself to be a racist institution.

Margaret Walker, the African American poet and novelist, characterized the condition of African Americans in verse in the early 1940's. In her poem "For My People" she reflected on the history, economy, religion, music, neighborhoods and humor of Black Americans, while also speculating on who would be needed to ensure a Black American future. Her poem ends:

let a people
loving freedom comes to growth. Let a beauty full of
healing and a strength of final clenching be the pulsing
in our spirits and our blood. Let the martial songs
be written, let the dirges disappear. Let a race of men now
rise and take control.

Fr. Lawrence Lucas was of a new era of Black persons, Black clergy, who would indeed write "martial songs." He would be among many "race men" who would "rise and take control."

Black American Catholics have a limited history of racial activism in the Church, but it is significant, nevertheless, in the genesis of the activism and in the quality of it. Prior to the Black Clergy Caucus activism begun in the late 1960's, these important efforts were due to the actions of Black Catholic laity. However, in April 1968, at Detroit, Michigan the first cohesive group of Black Catholic Clergy in history would emerge as the voice of Black Catholics to articulate the people's need for self-determination. With George Clements and Augustus Taylor, Larry Lucas would form the Black Catholic Clergy Caucus. He would become one of the early Presidents of the Caucus.

The self-determination of Black Catholics fostered by the Black Clergy Caucus would have enormous implications for the worship, the ministry and the activism of Black Catholics in the years to come. In New York Fr. Lawrence Lucas would become the voice of a new generation of Black Catholics at home in the Church, in the Schools, in the neighborhood streets, in the prisons and in the political offices. As Pastor of Resurrection Church in Harlem Fr. Lucas would contextualize his homilies, based on Holy Scripture, in the lives of Black New Yorkers confronting the racism of City Hall and of Wall Street. His moral admonitions to his congregations would demand respect for oneself in how Black people speak to one another, how they would dress and how they behave. His teaching gave appreciation of the African roots of the families to whom he ministered. Some would criticize Fr. Lucas at Resurrection Church for blurring the lines between faith and civic life. He would respond by arguing that the Prophets in the history of our faith were all guilty of failing to distinguish the salvation of God from the experience of humanity.

Deacon Kenneth Radcliffe served at Resurrection with Fr. Lawrence Lucas throughout Lucas's 24 years as Pastor. He says that Fr. Lucas would be found always in one of three places, "In the Church, in the School or on the Streets." Lucas was not one for Holy Name Breakfasts or Priest gatherings. Instead he attended Harlem Community Board meetings, he spoke at public rallies against mass incarceration of Black Men, he wrote for the local Harlem newspaper. He organized with several other New York activists, who were veterans of 60's and 70's era Black Power and Liberation movements, the "December 12th Movement." Organized in 1987 they predated "Black Lives Matter" by decades and focused their actions on the current and relentless fight against systemic racism, police murder and brutality against Black men, women and children, gentrification (forced removal) in housing, unemployment, poverty wages, inadequate healthcare and education and the criminalization of African people in the United States.

Sometimes even his friends and allies would call Fr. Lucas a bully. He could be relentless in speaking the truth, as he understood it, to anyone regardless of social status or the social situation. That meant he could be insulting in dismissing one's actions or one's thinking. This could be directed at those who had little respect for themselves, but especially it was directed at those whose speech or behavior disrespected Black Americans. Yet he was just as famously known in Harlem for his kindness in defending widows, getting errant sons freed from jail, visiting the sick and encouraging younger clergy weighed down by the burden of office. He was always only a phone call away. Perhaps it is much too facile to call him a "bully." Fr Lawrence Lucas was a priest, first and last, standing in the gap for his people. He did, throughout 60 years of ministry, what the best priests have always done. He advocated for his people and he defended them before God.