

April 28, 2019

WILL THE ASHES OF NOTRE DAME LEAD TO FAITH RENEWAL?

Notre Dame is burning! Will the ashes of Notre Dame lead to faith renewal? The whole world watched Notre Dame burning last Monday, the first day of the 2019 **Holy Week:** for long hours, people in the streets of Paris and throughout the world were watching anxiously the most famous and oldest Cathedral of the world go down in flames. At long last (midnight Paris time), the fire was contained and despite the total destruction of the tall spire dominating the whole structure and a collapse of the roof, **Notre Dame is still standing.**

I love **Notre Dame.** It is one of my favorite churches. Though I spent my childhood and adolescence near Lourdes in Southern France, I spent five wonderful years of graduate school in Paris. I lived within walking distance of Notre Dame. I loved the 15-minute walk along St Michel Boulevard before crossing the bridge over the Seine River leading to the Cathedral. I loved praying within such a beautiful church and enjoyed the Sunday organ recitals (free of charge!). Since then, I returned many times, including pilgrimages as a seminarian and then as a priest. The last time was in August 2017 when I led a OLHOC pilgrimage to Fatima and Marian sites in France.

From Ashes to new life! As we celebrated the **Triduum** at OLHOC, I reflected on what good could come out of this disastrous fire. **Would the ashes of Notre Dame lead to new life, to a renewal of faith?** Would Notre Dame be rebuilt exactly as it was standing for the last 800 years? While Notre Dame is closed during reconstruction (a minimum of five years), would pilgrimages or outside processions/masses lead a spiritual renewal? Would the new Notre Dame, emerging from the Ashes become a new, stronger Marian Site of devotion and miracles like the Miraculous Medal Chapel in Paris, La Salette in the Alps, or Lourdes in Southern France? I believe those three major apparitions of Mary in France in the 19th century were the result of the French Revolution's destruction of many churches and persecution/killing of priests and religious.

There were some early good news: 1. By miracle nobody was injured (although over 2,000 people were inside the building and hundreds of firefighters had to intervene). 2. Within six hours the fire could be contained while thousands of people prayed outside and sang Marian Hymns 3. A fire brigade chaplain Fr. Jean-Marc Fournier was able to rescue the Blessed Sacrament and the famous relic of Jesus' Crown of Thorns, reminding us of the Triduum: we believe (the Apostles Creed) that after his Passion, Death (wearing a crown of thorns) and Burial, Jesus descended into hell and on the third day he rose again from the dead. There were many comments about the rescue of relics and the Blessed Sacrament. In an interview on television, Fr. Fournier

described these agonizing moments. He felt that he was in hell surrounded by raging flames. Alone (all firefighters had been asked to evacuate the church as the collapse of the roof was imminent) he tried to protect the Blessed Sacrament- Body of Christ contained in one of the tabernacles from the fire. The church was totally empty when he finally was able to retrieve the Blessed Sacrament, and he still chose to give a Blessing/Benediction asking Jesus to protect the church consecrated to His mother. This reminded me that in recent homilies I have emphasized the importance of coming to Mass to have an encounter with God. Here it is the opposite: the burning of Notre Dame led to Christ coming out the flames to encounter all people outside Notre Dame. We can all meditate on this image.

The ashes remind us of our human fragility that we are dust and to dust we shall return (Ash Wednesday). The fire reminds us of Jesus saying " Destroy this temple (Jerusalem) and in three days I will rebuild it" (John 2:19). We know that Jesus referred to the temple as being His own body and to His anticipated Resurrection. The Blessed Sacrament rescued out of the flames reminds us of His Real Presence in the Eucharist and of His Resurrection. The fire also reminds us of our Baptism celebrated at Easter Vigil through the words of St Paul to the Romans (6:3-11) "*We were buried with Christ through baptism into death, just as Christ was raised from the dead ...we too might live in newness of life .. You must think of yourselves as being dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus*".

Once more, we had a wonderful Triduum at OLHOC. Your active participation is a blessing to our parish. We can all be grateful to God for the talent and the generous **gifts** from so many of our volunteers: the Altar Guild, the Music Ministry, the Youth Ministry, the Lectors, Ushers, Greeters, Altar Servers, and Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist. I am also grateful to God for the clergy and staff that help me greatly in carrying out my responsibilities as your pastor.

The fire of Notre Dame of Paris should bring **hope** in new life to all of us. Like people in Paris, each of us needs a spiritual renewal. We need the Fire of the Holy Spirit to clean our hearts of sinfulness and fill them with Joy, Peace, and Love. Come Holy Spirit! Help each of us to walk these 50 days of Easter Season (ending with Pentecost June 9) with open hearts! Help us to be ready to receive the Infinite Love and Mercy of Jesus! Help us to have a true conversion of heart! Come Holy Spirit! Help transform the hearts of our 51 youth who received the Sacrament of Confirmation on Friday April 26. Help each of us to proclaim with confidence on this **Sunday of Divine Mercy: Jesus I trust in you!**

*One in Christ,
Father Alain*

Sunday of Divine Mercy

Important Dates

April 28– Sacramental prep workshops- Youth Mass– All Youth Night– **No regular CCD classes Sunday or Monday**



May 5/6– CCD Classes

May 12/13– CCD Classes

FIRST COMMUNION: Rehearsal begins promptly at 6:00 pm (beginning in the social hall) on Friday, May 3rd. On First Communion Day (Saturday, May 4th), all First Communi-

cants should report to the Social Hall no later than 9:15 am. CCD Parents: please pay close attention to the schedule for the remainder of the year that was sent home after classes two weeks ago. The Sacramental Prep workshops on April 28 are for First Communion students and parents (10 am) and Confirmation Year 1 (grade 7) **AND** Year 2 (newly confirmed) students, parents, mentors, and any sponsors who may still be in town (2:30 - 6:30 pm, includes workshop, Youth Mass, Edge/LifeTeen).

Volunteers for Summer Activities and Beyond

We are currently recruiting adult volunteers (ages 18+) to work with our parish programs for children and youth over the summer and for the 2019-20 Year (chaperones, Vacation Bible School Volunteers, catechists, assistants, mentors, substitutes, office helpers, Youth Core Team members, All Youth Night helpers, OLLC Preschool volunteers, childcare during parish programs, etc.). If you are interested in volunteering, or are a parent of a child/youth in any of these programs, you are NEEDED!

Adult Volunteers (ages 18+) who have substantial contact with minors (under 18) or vulnerable adults are required to undergo Child Protection Training and get an electronic background check. The next Archdiocesan class for Child Protection taking place locally is Monday, June 3, 2019 at 6:30 pm at Archbishop Neale School in La Plata. Spaces are "first registered, first served". To register, establish an account at VIRTUS.org and select that particular class for training. Please see Nieda or Therese for more information or visit our website www.olhoc.com/safety

Separated and Divorced Catholics

Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church, 100 Village St, Waldorf, MD 20602 will be presenting a workshop: "Surviving Divorce" for Separated/ Divorced Catholics every Thursday, from May 2-June 13, 7:00-8:30pm. \$25.00 donation to cover for books and materials. For more information or to register, please contact Mary Pearson, 301-922-0084, maryp10@yahoo.com.

OLLC Preschool Announcement

OLLC Preschool fall 2019 registration is open! Parishioners, please share this information with families you know who may be looking for Catholic Preschool for their child or grandchild, and be sure you have registered your child for fall. For info or to register: email the preschool director, Nieda, at preschool@olhoc.org or call the church/preschool office at 301-645-7112 during office hours.

The Meals on Wheels program is currently seeking volunteers for the Waldorf/St. Charles route who can donate 1½ to 2 hours of their time, one day a month. We deliver 5 days a week. If you are interested in working with this special organization that helps those in need/homebound, please contact Kathy at (301)-843-8295."

Scripture Study - Join us on Tuesday mornings after the 9 am Mass to study the readings for the next Sunday.

Divine Mercy– Join us on the first Saturday of each month as we pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet as a community at 3 PM.

Outreach News

On April 18, Holy Thursday, OLHOC sponsored a delicious meal and fellowship at our Shepherd's Table dinner. Many thanks to our menu coordinators, Joan Dulcey and Mary Pearson as well as the many volunteers who helped prepare and serve the meal. Thank you also to Mary's Helping Hands for the beautiful cake donation and to Texas Roadhouse for providing rolls.

The next Shepherd's Table will be on June 21, 2019 at Good Shepherd Church.

Our next Outreach meeting will be on May 1, 2019 at 7 p.m. in Father Martin Hall. Everyone is welcome!

Sharing Sunday is the first Sunday of the month, but donations of non-perishable food may be left anytime. Thank you!

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We are asked to pray for:

Dennis Hook
Ana Maria Delmira Sibrian Escobar
Nestor Ermelindo Molina
Doris Chesley
James Thompson
Thoeun Tinn
Felicia & Myles Webster
Rebecca (Tess) Franch
Vicky Welch
Naomi Lilly
Sterling Greene
Aleli Puzon
Patricia Delgado

Larry McGraw
Vivian Truxon
Kenny Lindsay
Dorian Webster Sr.
Dionne Gause
Pat Fisher
Christ Goldhammer
Melody Hudson
Ernest Mack
James Wiltz
Adele Alvey
Dorothy Neal
Dunnie Proctor
Shirley Ehman
K.D. Dillard
Josephina Knapp

Maria Townsend
Crystal Beauregard
Sheryl Carter
Alex Leon
Sharketer Butler
Steven Bowling
Edna Yarngo
Kathly Grimes
Damien Price
and all our military and civilians serving in
harm's way.

*Please let us know if any names should be removed from the list.
Please pray for those who lost their lives, and all the people of Sri Lanka.*



Mass Intentions this Week

Saturday, April 27, 9:00 AM: Lavina Francis
Saturday, April 27, 5:00 PM: Our Lady Help of Christians Parishioners
Sunday, April 27, 8:30 AM: Peter Nikolai (+)
Sunday, April 28, 10:00 AM: Jose and Anna Marie Gonzales & family
Sunday, April 28, 11:30 AM: Henry Ballesteros
Sunday, April 28, 4:00 PM: Father Alain
Sunday, April 28, 7:00 PM: Evan Beck
Monday, April 29, 9:00 AM: Ramon Valdescona (+)
Tuesday, April 30, 9:00 AM: Joseph and Antony Fogal
Wednesday, May 1, 9:00 AM: Souls in Purgatory
Wednesday, May 1, 7:00 PM: Dennis Wick (+)
Thursday, May 2, 7:00 PM: Ghydeon Stuart
Friday, May 3, 9:00 AM: Deborah Storey
Friday, May 3, 8:00 PM: Chris Storey (+)

We welcome all new fully-initiated Catholics who received sacraments on Easter Sunday, our 50 young people who received the Sacrament of Confirmation on Friday, and ask your prayers for the 72 children who will receive their first Holy Communion on Saturday, May 4th.

Holy Hour for Vocations on June 1st from 10 am-11 am

Please join us in pray for the future Priest to be ordained on Saturday, June 15 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

Michael Russo, who was with us as a Seminarian in 2014 will be ordained.

Mass Readings for May 5, 2019.

Third Sunday of Easter

***First Reading**

Acts of the Apostles 5:27-32, 40b-41

***Second Reading**

Revelations 5:11-14

***Gospel**

John 21:1-19



www.usccb.org



Youth Pilgrimage Fund

A very special thanks to all who supported the youth through their generous donation with the Youth Pilgrimage Fund. If you still have not turned in your envelope you can either place it in the collection basket next week, or bring it to the office. Thank you for your continued support to the youth with your time, talent, treasure and prayers.

Steubenville Youth Conference - June 21-23, 2019 Attention current 8-12 graders - Spots still available!

Join us this summer for Steubenville Conference at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. A Steubenville Conference weekend is PACKED with dynamic speakers, worship music, Mass, Adoration and MORE! Come and encounter Christ with other teens from other states as we worship together and grow in our Catholic faith! Limited spots available. For more details & to register, visit www.olhoc.org/steubie19

Camp Covecrest - August 4-10, 2019 in Tiger, Georgia

Join us for Life Teen summer camp - Camp Covecrest, in the North Georgia Mountains, for an amazing and transformative week of fun, activities, time with friends, prayer and growing in your faith (i.e. high ropes, messy games, obstacle course, zip line, white water rafting, team building experiences, music, talks, reflections, Mass, Adoration & personal growth). For more details, watch a video & to register visit www.olhoc.org/camp

Life Teen (high school youth ministry): Sun. 5-6:30 pm: **April 28; & May 5**; Dinner Provided.

Edge (middle school youth ministry): meets monthly on All Youth Night – **April 28**

FIAT (elementary school Faith in Action Team): meets monthly on All Youth Night - **April 28**

For more Youth Events or questions contact Marlen Coles marlen@olhoc.org or visit: www.olhoc.org/ym

Please remember to bring in your Rice Bowls!

Parish Immigration Information Forum:

What's Going On? How can we help?

Saturday, May 4th 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

St. John Vianney, 105 Vianney Lane, Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Catholic Charities will present an overview of the difficult immigration issues facing immigrants and what steps parishes can take to be supportive. Catholic Charities and parishes around the country are organizing to help create more supportive communities for immigrants, to advocate for fair reforms, to accompany undocumented families and unaccompanied children as they seek to legalize their status.

Your Church: The Lord's House

Please continue to respect your church, the Lord's house, and **refrain from taking any food or beverage into the Church**. If your children need food or beverages, please use the cry room. Please care for your building investment by not walking on kneelers or using them as footrests.

Thank you!