

April 4, 2021

JOY OF EASTER!!!

As Deacon Rich and I arrived at the altar, like everyone in the large assembly we were waving our palms. We venerated the altar. Suddenly, I felt A GREAT JOY take over my HEART. I had not felt so joyful in a long time. It took me some time to realize what was happening.

As the Mass went on, it became clearer to me. This was the JOY OF EASTER! THE JOY OF THE RISEN LORD! As we processed in the church, we were entering with Jesus into the Heavenly Jerusalem! We were entering into the HOLY WEEK, which will culminate in EASTER VIGIL AND EASTER SUNDAY. Unconsciously, I was also reflecting on the Palm Sunday celebration of one year ago!

What a difference one year makes! Last Easter, our church had to be closed to the public. We were not even allowed to bless palms. We had a Palm Sunday without palms. We had a Palm Sunday without a congregation!

Last Easter, only Deacon Rich, Deacon Bill, Fr. Ben, and I were allowed around the altar. Only one person was representing our entire community of 1,200 parishioners: our volunteer cameraman Mike Spurgeon! This year, my JOY OF EASTER is coming from the presence of so many "new" faces that had not returned to our parish for the last 12 months. WHAT A JOY! This is what Easter is all about: a new beginning, a spiritual transformation by the RISEN LORD, the JOY of a renewed congregation coming to church to pray together around the altar and share in the BODY OF CHRIST!

The crowd at our Masses this Palm Sunday represented the crowd entering joyfully with Jesus in Jerusalem. Pope Benedict XVI reminded us that "*the palms we wave are the SPIRITUAL PALMS OF OUR SOULS.*" As you know, I love images. Certainly, on that entrance into the HOLY WEEK of 2021, the spiritual palms of my soul were "*PURE JOY*". Until that time, I had not realized how much I missed our large congregation during this year of pandemic. Internally, I was suffering without knowing it. The burst of my JOY came from that pain inside my soul being lifted up by the SPIRIT of the RISEN LORD! HE is walking with us at every Mass entrance! HE IS COMING TO US AT EASTER!

The early Fathers of the Church commented abundantly on the coats that people were throwing on the ground ahead of Jesus: "It is not our coats that we should spread before Christ, we must SPREAD OUT OUR LIVES, in ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE AND

ADORATION... We should SPREAD OURSELVES UNDER CHRIST'S FEET."

In a sermon on Palm Sunday, St. Andrew of Crete, bishop (8th century) said: "*Jesus is meek and HUMBLE and he will make his entry in Jerusalem in simplicity. Let us run to accompany him as he hastens toward his passion, and imitate those who met him then, not by covering his path with garments, olive branches or palms, but by doing all we can to prostrate ourselves before him by being HUMBLE and by trying to live as he would wish...JESUS' LOVE for men will never rest...So, let us SPREAD BEFORE HIS FEET, not garments or soulless olive branches, who delight the eye for a few hours and then wither, but OURSELVES, clothed in His GRACE, or rather, clothed completely in Him. We who have been BAPTIZED into Christ must ourselves be the garments that we spread before Him. Now that the crimson stains of our sins have been washed away in the saving waters of baptism and we have become white as pure wool, let us present the conqueror of death, not with mere branches of palms but with the real rewards of his victory. LET OUR SOULS take the place of the welcoming branches as we join today in the children's song: BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD. BLESSED IS THE KING OF ISRAEL.*"

At every Mass before the Eucharistic Prayer, we all join in saying: "*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. HOSANNAH IN THE HIGHEST!*" Every Mass is Palm Sunday Mass. Every Mass celebrates the PASCHAL MYSTERY: the PASSION, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. Every Mass is EASTER MASS! Let us recall with Dr Sri (fifth session of GIFT OF LOVE) that the word PASSION has two meanings: SUFFERING AND LOVE! It is by HIS LOVE that Jesus SAVES us in dying on the CROSS!

May the HOLY SPIRIT fill our hearts with the JOY AND LOVE OF THE RISEN LORD and guide us to be "PASSIONATE" DISCIPLES OF CHRIST! We cannot be simply "*Lukewarm*" Disciples of Christ. God wants all of us to be "*Passionate*" Disciples, with a great love for the Lord and always doing His will.

May you and your families all have a most blessed TRIDUUM AND EASTER SUNDAY! HE IS RISEN! HE IS TRULY RISEN! ALLELUIA!

One in Christ,
Fr. Alain

A Special Message from Fr. Alain

SUPPORTING OLHOC PANDEMIC RELIEF FUND

Several parishioners have inquired about how we can help parish families who are still struggling as a result of the pandemic. While it has been a full year hard on everyone in many ways, we would like to give some relief to those families most in need at this time, and we have decided to establish an OLHOC PANDEMIC RELIEF FUND. One of our priorities will be to assist families with children and youth, especially those who have lost income from reduced employment. While the recent stimulus checks are timely, they will be insufficient for most affected families.

We would like to invite all parishioners to consider contributing to this newly established OLHOC Pandemic Relief Fund. In the last 12 months, we have appreciated your continued generous Offertory donations despite the pandemic challenges. Your support is a blessing for our entire parish. Through the first 8 months of this fiscal year, (beginning July 2020), your generosity, coupled with a very cautious spending, has helped us to balance our reduced budget. We are now asking you to stretch your sacrificial support if possible, including those of you who can spare any of your stimulus funds.

In consultation with existing parish councils and committees, (including the Outreach Committee), we will channel your contribution to those parish families most in need. In particular, we like to support families with children attending our Religious Education Program, including partial payment of tuitions, books or special costs for those receiving the sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation in April/May. There is also a special need to support the families with youth attending the many activities of our Youth Ministry, in particular to enable some of our youth to attend our Summer Camp in Georgia this August. Any additional support will be most appreciated. Your contribution could help one of our youth have a special encounter with Christ this summer.

You can leave your contributions in a separate envelope labeled "OLHOC PANDEMIC RELIEF." For those of you giving online, via eCatholic, you can select "other category" and write "OLHOC Pandemic Relief". **For all online donations, you can click on our Donation Link page at OLHOC.org.**

Our Finance Council is reminding you that this year resumes the mandatory IRA distribution for those of retirement age. You can give to OLHOC any amount before tax contribution which leverages up your effective gift. For more details, please contact our Office Manager (Office@olhoc.org) or the Chair of our Finance Council (Potterra28@yahoo.com).

We welcome your comments and suggestions. Your feedback is much appreciated.

We thank God for your continued generosity to OLHOC activities.

May God keep protecting all of you! May you and your families have a most blessed EASTER SEASON!

One in Christ,

Fr. Alain

Easter Sunday

RCIA

Interested in joining and learning about the Catholic Church for the first time? Want to complete a Sacrament (Baptism, Eucharist, and/or Confirmation)? Classes meet on Wednesday, from 7 pm –9 pm. You may chose to come to the Father Martin Hall or virtually via Zoom. For more information, please contact Deacon Rich at deacon@olhoc.org or Diane and Mike Spurgeon at RCIA.olhoc@gmail.com

HELP KEEP OUR CHURCH CLEAN

Since last year, OLHOC cut back on many of the services we use to pay for. Due to financial restraints, the lawn maintenance is all done by volunteers, we no longer have a staff person to help out with the facilities, and we cut back on our cleaning services to once a week.

Please do your part in helping to keep our church clean.

How do we **know** we can trust the Gospels? Who **really** wrote them and when?

Could they be fabricated fables or are they authentic truth? Who does Jesus profess to be?

To find out, come join The Catholic Faith Explorers in our next study - **The Case for Jesus**. Dr. Brant Petri draws evidence from early Christian and non-Christian writings attesting to the authenticity, authorship, and dating of the Gospels, and gives an in-depth look at the Gospel accounts of Jesus's Crucifixion, Resurrection, and the proclamation of His divinity.

Class Dates/Time: 11 Apr - 6 Jun, Sundays at 8:00 am

Via Zoom Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94165603422?pwd=dIq2TjV0QldwOXhKRfJrQi9kQWc5QT09>

CCD Zoom Classes Schedule

Please ensure your child joins us for the following date/time:

3rd Grade– April 25th at 1 PM

4th Grade– April 26th at 7 PM

5th Grade– April 25th at 11:30 AM

6th Grade– April 25th at 2:30 PM

7th Grade– April 11th at 11 AM

Community Outreach

“Sharing Sunday” continues for the collection of non-perishable foods for the Food Bank and Family Shelter. The need is as great as ever for families in Waldorf! Your donations can be left in the Fr. Martin Hall all week long.

Thank you OLHOC for all your support!

The next Outreach meeting is April 7, 2021 At 7 p. m. on Zoom. The next Shepherd’s table is April 15, 2021

REMINDER

-Sanitize your hands before coming into church

-Masks are mandatory

-Maintain at least a 6 ft distance

Youth News

Life Teen (High School) Youth Ministry will meet on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 11th from 1pm - 2:30 pm. Bring your friends and join us for some fun, faith and fellowship! For more Youth Ministry events both in person or virtually, please visit www.olhoc.org/ymevents or contact Marlen Coles marlen@olhoc.org

All Youth Night!

Join us on **Sunday, April 18th** for Mass at 2:30 pm followed by Youth Ministry for youth in EDGE (middle school) and Life Teen (high school) from 3:30 pm-5 pm. Invite some friends to join you for some faith, fun and fellowship. Unfortunately at this time, we will not be offering FIAT (elementary) after Mass, we will keep you posted when FIAT will resume. Please visit www.olhoc.org/ymevents and signup to join us.

Sacramental Preparation for Confirmation will continue on Sunday, April 18th. For Year 2, we will be offering the option to attend in person. The workshop will be from 1-2:30 pm followed by 2:30 pm Mass and All Youth Night activities from 3:30 - 5pm. Students in Year 1, please check your email for the instructions on how to join the virtual gathering at 1pm. For more details and questions, visit www.olhoc.com/confirmation-1 or contact Marlen Coles marlen@olhoc.org

We are asked to pray for:

Brandon Mack
Nestor Ermelindo Molina
James Thompson
Rebecca (Tess) Franch
Joseph Albrittian
Sid and Suszanna Marcus
Aleli Puzon
Patricia Delgado
Ann Marie Hobart
Larry McGraw
Ilene Custer
Derrick Webster
Julie Davis
David DeMarr
Dunnie Proctor
Amelia Vinceguerra
Lorraine Celijewski
Cren Wolden
Tabitha Barton
Maria Townsend

Chrystal Beauregard
Sheryl Carter
Alex Leon
Sharketer Butler
Steven Bowling
Edna Yarngo
Kathly Grimes
Sheny Padilla
David Mesler
Victor Cordero
Georgiana Norgren
Marie Bottorf
Dorian Webster
Dionne Gause
Billy Dexter
Trenia Price
Erick M. Knapp
Norm Green
Sarah Dixon
Grace Albrittian
Elaine Moses

Yvonne Buford
Karen Zimmerman
Steve Wyloge
Terri Elizabeth McAllister Burnette
Joanne Johnson
Mike Spurgeon
Mary A. Dyson
Kevin Viel Sr.
Ligia Lam
David Stanley
Jim McMahon
Drew Shuda
Wilma Cruz

and all our military and civilians serving in harm's way.



Mass Intentions this Week

Saturday, April 3, 8:00 PM: Cecilia Sinense
Sunday, April 4, 7:00 AM: Father Alain
Sunday, April 4, 8:30 AM: OLHOC Parishioners
Sunday, April 4, 10:00 AM: AnnaMarie & Jose Gonzales & family
Sunday, April 4, 11:30 AM: Peter Nikolai (+)
Sunday, April 4, 1:00 PM: Father Ben
Sunday, April 4, 7:00 PM: Leonarda & Cesar Dizon (+)
Monday, April 5, 9:00 AM: Will Etauier (+)
Tuesday, April 6, 9:00 AM: Marie Joassaint
Wednesday, April 7 9:00 AM: Richard White (+)
Wednesday, April 7, 7 PM: Anthony Andrews
Thursday, April 8, 9:00 AM: Tony Campbell (+)
Friday, April 9, 9:00 AM: Orlando Lagman (+)

Pregnant? Help is Available

Call 1-800-712-4357, text HELPLINE to 313131, or visit optionline.org to find the nearest pregnancy resources near you.

Holy Thursday Mass- 7 PM
Good Friday Service- 5 PM (Spanish), 7 PM
EASTER MASSES

Saturday 8 PM.
Sunday 7 AM, 8:30 AM. 10 AM, 11:30 AM. 1 PM, 7 PM

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

Friday Scripture Study- The Friday night scripture study is now online. Please call the office for information on how to join us.

First Friday- The first Friday of each month the evening Mass is dedicated to promoting the Priesthood. Following evening Mass, devotion to the Alliance of the two Hearts.

First Saturday-Join members of the Marian Group on the first Saturday of the month after the 9 am Mass. Learn more about consecrating your life to Jesus through Mary.

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

OLHOC Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer request, please call the parish office or send email to office@olhoc.org.

Mass Readings for April 11, 2021

2nd Sunday of Easter

***First Reading**

Acts of the Apostles 4:32-35

***Second Reading**

1 John 5:1-6

***Gospel**

John 20:19-31

www.usccb.org





The Divine Mercy Message and Devotion

The message of The Divine Mercy is simple. It is that God loves us – all of us. And, He wants us to recognize that His mercy is greater than our sins, so that we will call upon Him with trust, receive His mercy, and let it flow through us to others. Thus, all will come to share His joy.

The Divine Mercy message is one we can call to mind simply

by remembering ABC:

A - Ask for His Mercy. God wants us to approach Him in prayer constantly, repenting of our sins and asking Him to pour His mercy out upon us and upon the whole world.

B - Be merciful. God wants us to receive His mercy and let it flow through us to others. He wants us to extend love and forgiveness to others just as He does to us.

C - Completely trust in Jesus. God wants us to know that all the graces of His mercy can only be received by our trust. The more we open the door of our hearts and lives to Him with trust, the more we can receive.

This message and devotion to Jesus as The Divine Mercy is based on the writings of Saint Faustina Kowalska, an uneducated Polish nun who, in obedience to her spiritual director, wrote a diary of about 600 pages recording the revelations she received about God's mercy. Even before her death in 1938, the devotion to The Divine Mercy had begun to spread.

The message and devotional practices proposed in the *Diary of Saint Faustina* and set forth in this web site and other publications of the Marians of the Immaculate Conception are completely in accordance with the teachings of Church and are firmly rooted in the Gospel message of our Merciful Savior. Properly understood and implemented, they will help us grow as genuine followers of Christ.

Spend time to learn more about the mercy of God, learn to trust in Jesus, and live your life as merciful to others, as Christ is merciful to you.

(<https://www.thedivinemercy.org/message>, 2021)