

A Message from Our Pastor...

Dear Parishioners,

With Ash Wednesday just around the corner our thoughts may be more focused on what we will be eating on Tuesday than what we won't be eating on Wednesday and the days following!

Even though this is my first in Hagerstown, I've noticed very quickly that our German heritage seems quite pronounced at this time. I have heard more references to "Fastnacht" than "Mardi Gras" ... and I'm looking forward to the sweets that go by the same name!

I figured I would find out how "Fastnacht" translates into English, and it seems to be "carnival." In Italy, the period starting three Sundays before Ash Wednesday (*Septuagesima*, as I mentioned last week) has essentially the same name, "Carnivale," and a literal translation of "carnival" would be "farewell to meat."

There was, in the past, a very practical aspect to this period preceding Ash Wednesday. Abstinence from meat along with fasting used to be required *each* day of Lent (although Sunday still retained a festive character as it does today). Some of the Churches of the East would and still do require abstinence from other things such as dairy products. So this period of "farewell to meat" was a way of clearing the cupboards and store rooms of things that would spoil before the end of Lent if not consumed. For us today, it seems to be more one last "hurrah" before undertaking our penances.

The current norms for penance in the Lenten season are as follows. *"For members of the Latin Catholic Church, the norms on fasting are obligatory from age 18 until age 59. When fasting, a person is permitted to eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal. The norms concerning abstinence from meat are binding upon members of the Latin Catholic Church from age 14 onwards."* *The Church encourages us to continue the Good Friday fast up until the Easter Vigil Mass.*

When we consider what sort of fast is *required* of us in our own day and the access we have to all sorts of tasty foods, the contrast between Fastnacht and Ash Wednesday doesn't seem so sharp. Yet as I mentioned last week, we should put our hearts into our penances just the same. We can ask the Lord for His guidance about what in fact we should give up. To make this sacrifice truly fruitful, we should try to connect it to the prayer and almsgiving activities we also undertake in this Holy Season.

Prayer, fasting, almsgiving should all be directed to lifting up our souls more and more to our Lord who not only created us but redeemed us from our sins by dying on the Cross. They should be undertaken with the same spirit of self-denial with which the Lord came down from heaven and was born of the Virgin, with which He fasted in the desert, with which He gave himself up to death. Jesus did all of this to save us. We should observe Lent with a view to the same: our own salvation and that of others, all the while giving thanks to God that He loves us and gave His life for us.

God bless you and keep you in His care,

Father Cibelli

P.S. Your response to the relocation of the speakers in church has been overwhelmingly positive. While there may be a few things less than ideal, everyone seems to be saying that he or she can hear better now. However, if you have any concerns, please make sure you share them by the end of this week. You can email them to Paula pbowers@saintmarysonline.org or leave a message over the phone. We can't guarantee a personal reply, but your feedback is important to us and will be taken into consideration before making the final decision about where the speakers should be mounted. Thank you!

February 26, 2017

8TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

St. Mary Stewardship Blessings

2/19/2017	Attendance	846
Offertory		\$9,426.77
Online Giving		2,911.70
Capital Improvement		40.00
Total		\$12,378.47
Amount Needed**		\$15,239
**This is the amount of weekly collection that would allow St. Mary to break even for fiscal year 2017		
School Support		\$1,701.70
Poor Box		128.16
*Not used for St. Mary operating expenses		

St. Michael Stewardship Blessings

2/19/2017	Attendance	43
Offertory		\$492.00
Amount Needed** \$749		
**This is the amount of weekly collection that would allow St. Michael to break even for fiscal year 2017 *Not used for St. Michael operating expenses		



The Ash Wednesday collection is for Eastern Europe.

Next week's second collection is for Embracing Our Mission.

The Sacrament of Baptism

Baptism is God's most beautiful and magnificent gift....

We call it gift, grace, anointing, enlightenment, garment of immortality, bath of rebirth, seal, and most precious gift. It is called *gift* because it is conferred on those who bring nothing of their own; *grace* since it is given even to the guilty; *Baptism* because sin is buried in the water; *anointing* for it is priestly and royal as are those who are anointed; *enlightenment* because it radiates light; *clothing* since it veils our shame; *bath* because it washes; and *seal* as it is our guard and the sign of God's Lordship.

St. Mary's offers the **gift of baptism** on the **second and fourth Saturdays** of each month at **12:30pm**. **Baptism Class** is scheduled the first Sunday of each month in the **Conference Room of the Parish Center from 12:30 to 1:30pm**.

It is very important that babies be baptized as soon as possible and preferably within six weeks of birth. Therefore, Fr. Cibelli is offering this sacrament more often. A good precedence would be, as soon as parents begin to announce their pregnancy, to call and schedule their baptism agenda shortly after. Call the Parish Office 301-739-0390 ext. 110, Paula will assist you.

First Communion

All children making their First Communion need to be preparing for their interviews. Please call Jan at 301-739-0390 extension 129 to schedule an interview with Fr. Cibelli.

Confirmation

All children receiving Confirmation need to be preparing for their interviews. Please call Jan at 301-739-0390 ext 129 to schedule an interview with Fr. Cibelli.



The Flowers on all the altars this weekend are in Thanksgiving for Family.

Contribution Statement: Contribution statements are available. If you would like a contribution statement, please call Paula at 301-739-0390, ext. 110. You can then pick up your statement, emailed, or have it mailed to you. If you made a contribution of \$250 or more at any one time, you will automatically receive a statement, in accordance with IRS requirements.

St. Mary Church Holy Mass Intentions
February 27—March 5, 2017

Day	Date	Mass	Mass Intention
Monday	2/27	6:30	Marguerita Ronda
		8:30	Margarita Rondo
Tuesday	2/28	6:30	Julian Dingzun
		8:30	David McLaughlin
Wednesday	3/1	6:30	Gie and Riza Roxas & Family
		8:30	Virgilio Rondo
Thursday	3/2	6:30	Special Intentions of Davida Tengey
		8:30	Special Intentions of Catherine Daley
Friday	3/3	6:30	Dan and Connie Mankiewicz & Family
		8:30	James and Joan St. Ledger
Saturday	3/4	8:30	Special Intentions of Maria Taylor
		5:15	Bill Hudson
Sunday	3/5	8:00	Parish Members of St. Mary and St. Michael
		9:30	James Gray, Sr.
		11:00	Special Intentions of Mike Morrell
		12:50	In Honor of St. Joseph



The **hosts** being used for the month of February have been donated by an anonymous donor.



The **candles** being used for the month of February have been donated by Sandra Elkin in honor of her father, Joseph A. Sekerak

The wine being used for the month of February has been donated by an anonymous donor.

St. Michael Mass Intention

Katherine "Katie" Anne Hescock

Readings for February 26—March 5, 2017

Sunday 2/26	EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME Isaiah 49:14-15 / Corinthians 4:1-5 / Matthew 6:24-34
Monday 2/27	Sirach 17:20-24 / Mark 10:17-27
Tuesday 2/28	Sirach 35:1-12 / Mark 10:28-31
Wednesday 3/1	ASH WEDNESDAY Jl 2:12-18 / 2 Corinthians 5:20—6:2 / Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18
Thursday 3/2	THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY Deuteronomy 30:15-20 / Luke 9:22-25
Friday 3/3	FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY (USA: St. Katharine Drexel, Virgin) Isaiah 58:1-9a / Matthew 9:14-15
Saturday 3/4	SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY (St. Casimir) Sirach 17:1-15 / Mark 10:13-16
Sunday 3/5	FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7 / Roman 5:12-19 / Matthew 4:1-11

Do you have blessed palms at home from last year? St. Mary's is collecting blessed palms to make ashes for Ash Wednesday (March 1st).

Please bring old palms to the church by END OF TODAY , FEBRUARY 26TH for collection. Thank you!

Please join current students, the “Catholic Retrievers” Campus Ministry, in celebrating the spring semester Alumni Mass and dinner on Sunday March 12 at 5 pm in the Harbor Multipurpose Room on UMBC's campus. Come and experience the spirit of current students, share your experiences of faith and life after college, and learn how you can help the Faith to grow on campus.

RSVP on Facebook by searching for “UMBC Catholic Alumni” or by contacting Hannah Jones '15 at umbccatholicalumni@gmail.com or Deacon Doug Lovejoy at lovejoy.doug@gmail.com or 609 314-1905. Don't forget to check out www.catholicretrievers.com/alumni to sign up for our mailing list!

ASK THE PRIEST

Father,

Is it acceptable by the Catholic Church to be an organ donor at death? Also, is it acceptable to have a will?

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #[2296](#) “Organ transplants are in conformity with the moral law if the physical and psychological dangers and risks to the donor are proportionate to the good sought for the recipient. Organ donation after death is a noble and meritorious act and is to be encouraged as a expression of generous solidarity. It is not morally acceptable if the donor or his proxy has not given explicit consent. Moreover, it is not morally admissible to bring about the disabling mutilation or death of a human being, even in order to delay the death of other persons.” Wills are important legal documents that allow for the disposition of your property after death. Will are especially important to provide a legacy for your children or to make donations to charity that you may not have been able to make during your lifetime. The laws regarding those who die without a will differ from state to state but when you die without a will, the state decides who will inherit your property and sometimes the government takes a large share. If you are referring to a so-called “Living Will” that determines your medical care in the event of your being rendered incapable of communicating your wishes, that is another thing all together. End-of- life issues are complex and so I would direct your attention to the pastoral letter of the Maryland Catholic Bishops entitled “*Comfort and Consolation: Care of the Sick and the Dying.*” It can be found on the Internet and is very readable and understandable. To quote just one passage, “It is important to examine any advance directive you may be offered by a health care professional or by your lawyer to be sure that it calls for decisions that are morally appropriate. Good decisions are based on the actual condition of the patient. It may be the case that treatment prudently chosen at one point in a progressive illness may become ineffective or unduly burdensome when one is imminently dying and therefore no longer morally obligatory. Be sure any advance directive allows decision makers to decide based on your actual condition.”

“Ask The Priest” is a continuing feature of the Bulletin. If you have a question regarding the Catholic faith, please place your question in the box on the back table.

Volunteers Urgently Needed for Mary's Center

Mary's Center, Inc. a Catholic Pregnancy Center, is seeking volunteers for its Hagerstown Center. If you are able to donate a few hours each week to help women and teens in a crisis pregnancy or in need of material assistance for their babies, please call the Center at 301-739-1234 or Ann at 301-790-1686. New volunteer training will begin March 7.

SVDP— Assistance to the poor and suffering is provided through your donations to the Poor Box. Anyone suffering through a hardship is encouraged to contact the Saint Vincent de Paul Society for assistance. Phone 301-739-0390 ext 124.

St. Patrick's Day Dispensation

With St. Patrick's Day (March 17) falling on a Friday during Lent this year, Archbishop William E. Lori has granted Catholics in the Archdiocese of Baltimore a dispensation from abstinence from eating meat that day. Catholics practice fasting and abstinence as penitential practices which unite Catholics to the redemptive suffering and death of Jesus. Catholics abstain from meat on Fridays during Lent in remembrance of the day Christ died. In lieu of abstaining from meat on St. Patrick's Day, the Archbishop encourages those members of the faithful of the Archdiocese to engage in some additional act of prayer, service to the poor, or almsgiving.

PANGBORN KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

- ◆ **New council website for keeping informed of council news:** www.kofc1365.org
- ◆ **Brotherhood Council Meetings 2nd & 4th Thursdays at 8pm** in the Council Hall. Our Trustee for 2016-2017 is Cel Shannon. For information, please contact Cel Shannon at cel_s67@hotmail.com.
- ◆ **Bingo Bingo Bingo.** Every Tuesday at the **Knights of Columbus Hall (20340 Leitersburg Pike, Hagerstown, MD 21742)** Starting at 6:45 pm we conduct 34 bingo games for the public. Please join us and have fun.
- ◆ Every practical Catholic man over the age of 18 should become a Knight. We need your help. Speak with a night about joining our order.
- ◆ The Knights of Columbus has launched a FREE smartphone app on Android and Apple iOS platforms that show what the Order has to offer eligible Catholic men and their families! Featuring an overview of the Orders work in providing security to families, as well as its charitable and Church activities, The "Knights of Columbus: Join Us" app is a concise and engaging way to share with potential new members the good works and insurance protection made possible by K of C membership. Users can also access an online form which they can complete as a first step in becoming a Knight! The app is available for FREE download through iTunes or the Google Play store.
- ◆ Pangborn Council of the Knights of Columbus will host **St. Patrick Celebration Dinner & Dance Saturday, March 18th opening at 6:00pm at the Columbus Hall on Leitersburg Pike.** Donation \$15.00 & children under 12 \$6. Contact Fred Nugent for advanced ticket sales at FNugent@verizon.net.

SCHOOL NEWS

Registration Now Open!

Registration for the 2017-2018 school year for Pre-K 4 through 7th Grade is now Open.

Call or email Rachel O'Connor at 301-733-1184 or roconnor@stmarycatholicsschool.org for an information packet and/or a tour.

Introducing - Take A Look Tuesdays

SMCS staff will be available every Tuesday from 9:00 am – 11:00 am to give you a tour and provide information about St. Mary Catholic School.

Stop by and see for yourself why St. Mary Catholic School is the right place for your student.

Starting New for 2017-2018

St. Mary Catholic School is excited to announce a Full Day option (8:15 AM – 2:45 PM) will be available for our Pre-K 4 program.

The Half Day option is from 8:15 AM – 11:30 AM. Space is limited so don't delay. Call or email Rachel O'Connor at 301-733-1184 or roconnor@stmarycatholicsschool.org for an information packet and/or a tour.

Welcome Grants

Students who are currently enrolled in public school who wish to transfer to St. Mary Catholic School are eligible to receive a tuition grant for \$2,000 off the first year's tuition and \$1,000 off the second year's tuition.

A limited number of grants are available to students actively participating in a Catholic parish. Grants will be available from January 20th until May 1st, 2017 for Grades 2nd through 5th only.

RESPECT LIFE: Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 1, and so does the Lenten 40 Days for Life prayer campaign. PRAYER. FASTING. And PEACEFUL VIGIL. That is the formula of 40 Days for Life: to focus at the local level where the family and the unborn must be defended. All over the country, God-fearing men, women and children are standing up, and offering prayerful presence outside the local abortion facility where mothers are on the verge of destroying God's greatest gift – the life of their unborn child. While we are not attempting to cover all 40 days and nights of Lent at the local abortion facility at 160 W. Washington St. (just 3 doors from St. Mary Church), we DO request that you come and offer prayerful presence on the 2 days each week that women are in danger: every Thursday (about noon to 2:30 p.m.); and every other Tuesday (9 a.m. to noon), and every other Saturday (11 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.). This week it is open Tuesday, Feb. 28 and Thursday, March 2. The following week it will be open Thursday, March 9 and Saturday, March 11. When we show up and pray, hearts and minds are changed, and babies lives are saved. The power of prayer is triumphing over the evil that is abortion. Call Janet at 240-420-0440 for more information.

Steubenville summer youth conferences.

Saint Mary's is again taking a contingent to the summer youth conferences at The Franciscan University of Steubenville. This is an incredible experience for high school youth to experience their Catholic faith with over 2,000 other young people. There are Dynamic speakers, breakout sessions, contemporary music and wonderful opportunities to encounter our Lord more deeply. If you or your child or someone you know in high school has not been to this event, it is encouraged for them to try to make it.

July 14-16, 2017

Cost estimate' \$250. Fundraisers will be done to help defray this cost.

\$40 deposit due by March 5, 2017.

Deposit can be turned in at CTG or to the parish office youth ministry.

Contact Todd at 301-491-4881 / hagerstownhomeseller@gmail.com

for more information.