



St. Matthew's Anglican Catholic Church
THE PARISH MESSENGER
Newport News, VA



April - May 2011 Issue



Fr. Jason's Jottings...



Dear friends in Christ,

Well here we are in April and as the old expression says, "April showers bring May flowers." I know that the end of March seemed to bring its fair share of rain and will be curious to see how much rain we get this month as we prepare to welcome the flowers in May. Kari and I have a membership at the Norfolk Botanical Garden and I know once the flowers are in bloom we will be up there with Melissa to get her pictures taken in her best spring attire.

But there is something fitting I believe about this expression that "April showers bring May flowers" that goes simply beyond the weather and the transition from in essence winter to spring. It reminds us that often times in life we must experience a "cleansing period" before things get better. As we find ourselves maybe caught in a violent storm, with the wind and the rain, lightening and thunder, and all of the things that can strike fear in us as we go through that period, can make surviving the storm all the better. As the storm calms down and the final raindrops fall, the smell in the air takes on a new clean and fresh fragrance. The rays of light begin to pour through the clouds and push back the darkness. Maybe we even see a rainbow begin to break through the clouds and reach out across the sky, serving as our reminder that through it all God's presence and His promises remain (Genesis 9:13-15).

As we transition now from March to April we find ourselves halfway through our Lenten journey. In many ways Lent is designed to serve as our April shower. It is a time that we are called each in our own way to fast, abstain, to pray, to repent and to seek forgiveness. It is a time in which we are to examine ourselves and to prepare ourselves. Some folks do the things that I mentioned just a moment ago, some people may additionally attend weekday services or Stations of the Cross, others may have their own personal devotions or acts that they choose to do during Lent, but all of it is meant to serve the same purpose. It is meant to be a time in which we "cleanse" ourselves in preparation for the joy of Easter.

The celebration of the Resurrected Lord Jesus Christ... Easter is about the salvation of all of mankind... for that matter we can say it about all of creation being brought back into a right relationship with God through his death on the Cross.

I recently had the pleasure of joining an Orthodox priest friend of mine for their evening worship service where in they venerate the cross. One of the prayers recited that night talks about how even the trees should rejoice that they played a role in the salvation of all mankind, and I thought about that as an interesting concept from their prayers. Kari always tells me the story of the dogwood tree and I while I had never heard it before, it is an interesting and cute tale, which I will allow her to tell to anyone who asks her about it. But the fact is that all of creation is brought into a right relationship with God and as we read about in Revelation chapter 21 with Christ's second coming all of creation will be made new.

But often times to make something new we must first tear down something else that was put there in its place. It is why those April showers cause old branches to fall; they wash away the old topsoil and sand, and make room for new growth. There is a reason why so many of Jesus' teachings and parables deal with these same sorts of concepts, because they are so applicable to our lives and we can relate to them. But none of this is easy. In the Collect for Monday before Easter it says,

"Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified; Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

To me this prayer sums up our Lenten journey, but it also sums up the Christian life. It is not meant to be an easy journey, but we follow a journey that was not meant to be easy. (Cont. on pg. 4)



THE SENIOR WARDEN'S WISDOM

Vestry Meetings

Your vestry meets on the third Tuesday every month at 630pm. The vestry makes decisions concerning the temporal affairs of the parish. You can help in that decision making process by attending and providing your input. All parishioners are encouraged to attend.

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild is looking for a few good souls to help with its mission of preparing the altar and laying out the vestments for each liturgical service. Though ladies have traditionally answered this calling, gentlemen are also welcome. Please see Val Rasioleski who can answer all your questions about how you can become a member of the Altar Guild.

It costs about \$40 each week for the flower arrangements on the altar. This money is not provided out of the parish operating funds. The Altar Guild maintains separate funds. Its income comes from the votive candles and donations made specifically to the Altar Guild. Sometimes the funds run low so please remember the Altar Guild in your financial support of the parish.

Social Life

Saint Matthew's doesn't have a formal social committee but it sure seems like we do with all the social happenings. Many thanks to John and Shirley Murphy for planning the many social events.



John & Shirley Murphy present check from the Caribbean cruise fund raiser to Fr. Jason.

The Caribbean cruise in January was a great success. Sixteen people went, including six from St Matthew's. The parish collected \$439 in donations through the revenue sharing arrangement with Memorable Cruises and Vacations travel agency operated by the Murphy's.

Planning is underway for the next cruise in February, 2012, sailing to southern Caribbean ports from San Juan, Puerto Rico. Cabins are available for the cruise. Check with John or Shirley for more info.

A picnic will be held at Indian Cove (near Sandbridge) on June 4. Tentatively, another picnic is planned at Newport News Park on a Saturday during the last week of July or first week of August. Tickets are still available for the Virginia Tattoo and Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

Interior Decorating Committee

Gladys Zhoroff, committee chair, would like to hear from you about decorating ideas. Under consideration is whether or not to hang selected art work and icons, and if so, what kind. Gladys is still looking for folks who would like to participate in the icon cross-stitching project.

Children's Room Committee

Kari Dechenne and her committee are busy working up ideas for the renovation of the children's room. At the March vestry meeting Kari presented a sketch of the proposed layout and discussed child-friendly paint colors.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Shrove Tuesday, also known as Pancake Tuesday, is the church's version of Mardi Gras. It's that last opportunity to splurge before Lenten fasting begins the following day. The accumulated stores of flour, eggs, sugar, and butter are removed from our kitchen pantries and made into pancakes. At Saint Matthew's it has been a longstanding tradition for the lay readers to host the Pancake Supper. Our lay readers did a superb job. Not only did they prepare and cook the pancakes and sausages, they also cleaned up afterward.



Jim Elsnau samples his handiwork in the kitchen.



Beryl Benner and Shirley Murphy chow down on pancakes and sausages.



The Good News of Adoption

Last month Nila and I went out of state at the request of her cousin. She and her husband are already the proud parents of four adult and teenage children, but they recently decided to adopt a new member into their family. It was our first direct experience with an adoption proceeding and gave me a few devotional insights.

The cousin and her husband came to know of a first grade boy who came from a troubled family. The little boy whom I will call Tommy (not his real name) was a victim of fetal alcohol syndrome, so he started off with somewhat of a mental handicap. In addition to this problem, the natural parents did not take their parenting responsibilities seriously. The young boy would show up daily at school with the same dirty clothing and without the benefit of having had anything for breakfast. It was not long before the other children singled him out and essentially shunned him.

Nila's cousin saw Tommy's plight and took him in as a foster child. The natural parents were all too happy to have one less responsibility. Over a couple of years, a bond developed and the foster family decided to initiate formal adoption procedures. This can be a costly and lengthy legal process, and they found that out. Nonetheless they persevered and in February of this year, the final court date was set for the adoption.

As I mentioned, I had never seen this legal process. Accordingly, it was interesting to watch the formalities in the court room as each party---the adoptive parents, the social workers, the lawyers, and the judge, and Tommy---all made their statements. Interestingly the judge broke down in tears when she explained that she usually sees negative events daily in her courtroom and that this adoption procedure was a grand exception.

Tommy is now a full part of the family. There is no legal distinction between him and his four natural brothers and sisters. He will inherit equally with each of them. An adoption cannot be reversed.

I was reminded that the Bible uses the word adoption at least five times. St. Paul speaks of our adoption as children of God. We were born in sin needing redemption. Through the merits of Christ we are brought "...unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Eph 1:5 Just as Tommy had no innate merit to commend himself to his new parents, we did not either. Just as love brought

Tommy into his new status, love brings us into our heavenly adoption.

The next time you hear of someone who is legally adopted or of someone who is going to be adopted, take a moment to reflect on the heavenly picture it represents. I wish everyone could have seen the glow on Tommy's face when the judge pronounced the final approval. Should the glow on our faces be any less at having been adopted as children of God?

James Deviese



ST. MARTHA'S GUILD

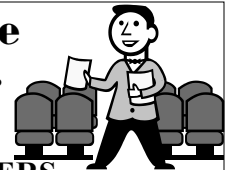
All ladies of the parish are members.

Meets the third Wednesday of each month for lunch.

Come out and join the ladies for food and fellowship!

Sunday Usher Schedule for the 11 AM Service...

April - May



SUNDAY DATE

USHERS

3 APRIL 2011

LESLIE SMITH

10 APRIL 2011

STEVE PILLO
MALCOLM MARTIN

17 APRIL 2011

SAM HADEN

24 APRIL 2011

WILL LEARY
BILL LEARY

1 MAY 2011

BEN HADEN
GEORGE ZHOROFF

8 MAY 2011

LESLIE SMITH

15 MAY 2011

STEVE PILLO
MALCOLM MARTIN

22 MAY 2011

SAM HADEN

29 MAY 2011

WILL LEARY
BILL LEARY



Fr. Jason's Jottings...



We do not follow a God who simply snapped His fingers and brought everything back into a right relationship with Himself, but instead chose to send His only begotten Son to not be sent “up to joy but first he suffered pain and entered not into glory before he was crucified.” We are each called to carry our own cross and follow in His footsteps, not only during Lent but all the year through.

Which raises a few things that I would like to share with you all as we continue our Lenten journey and enter into the Easter season. I would like to encourage each of you to consider how worship fits into your schedule and how you fit into worship. Differing traditions say different things, one of the larger traditions has their “Holy days of obligation” and we even have our “Low Sundays,” but attending church services is not about meeting an obligation or just about getting out of the house Sunday morning. It is part of our journey of growing in the faith and growing as a church and Christian community.

There are many folks who attend at Christmas and Easter and while we may view these as the “high points” of the Christian year there are no Sundays or other Feast days that are necessarily more important or less important than others the Sacraments we receive and the grace we receive through them are the same whether we are here at 9 o'clock or 11 o'clock, on Sunday or Wednesday, or some other day/night of the week. Our desire to come to church should be driven by our desire to grow closer to Christ and be seen as part of our personal journey that we pray will end “none other than the way of life and peace.”

Another thing that I would like to mention is that I am very excited to see so many of you participating in the life of the church. While our attendance at liturgy and with other more directly “spiritual” functions is good, it is also only one part of our growing together as a community in faith. As we get involved in other things like going to the Virginia International Tattoo, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, or the quarterly Rector dinners, we are afforded to get to know one another and to build bonds of friendship and communion that go beyond simply sharing a pew with one another on Sundays and the few minutes we get to spend together at coffee hour. One of the things you will see in churches that are growing, is an emphasis not only on the church as a place of Christian worship, but also as a place of Christian community. Somewhere where people can come together and fellowship with one another and build solid relationships with one another that are counter to the frivolous relationships that we so often find ourselves in amongst the secular world. And so I would like to encourage each of you to invite a friend when we have these functions, because someone who may not want to come and sit in a pew with us on Sunday, may come with us to see the Tattoo or the choir and then say to themselves, “hey these people not only love Jesus, but also each other, and that is a church I want to belong to.”

So there you have it my thoughts for this Lent and so I close praying that you are having a blessed and fruitful Lenten journey and I look forward to sharing with you the joys of the Resurrection as we look forward to Easter!

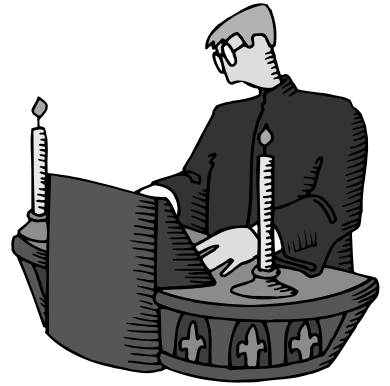
In Christ,
Fr. Jason +

Do you enjoy the beauty of fresh flowers?

Easter is drawing near and anyone who would love to see tons of gorgeous flowers on the altar are asked to please make a donation using the special envelopes found on the table in the Narthex as you enter the church. Please just place your donation in the envelope and then place it in the offering plate on Sunday morning.

If you enjoy the altar flowers the rest of the year please sign up for a Sunday or two on the signup sheet on the bulletin board in the Narthex. The Altar Guild and the rest of us all thank you!

Curate's Corner: From the Desk of Fr. Joel



Today marks the beginning of the fourth week of Great Lent and we are just three weeks away from celebrating the resurrection of our Lord from the dead. Lent is the time of the year when we should strive to draw closer to the Holy Eucharist and allow the grace of Christ to fill our being. With that in mind I would very much like to continue to look at the various saints who were bestowed the title of “Doctor of the whole Church.” They were individuals who like many of you were every day people. They had likes and dislikes and I suppose some had a temper to deal with from time to time. We know that St. Peter had a temper, at least that has always been the saying.

There were (4) Western- Roman Doctors of the Church. St. Ambrose (340-397) was considered a “Pastoral Doctor” If you were to ponder the time I would tend to think it was about his ability to speak with all clarity and grace. In today's world in terms of theology you have a Doctor of Pastoral Theology or a P.Th.D, then you have a S. T. D. or Doctor of Sacred Theology. All coming down from the time and days of St. Ambrose. You then had St. Jerome (345-420) who held the title of Doctor of Biblical Science. For St. Jerome he understood the teaching of the Church he clearly understood the essence of the Holy Eucharist. The truth of Christ revealed to the apostles, think about that if you will

We next find St. Augustine, (354-430) who was considered the “Doctor of Grace”. Consider the words and meaning.? We often hear of one filled with grace and I should think that one who was short tempered and ill willed, would not be one filled with grace. This should help us to think about Augustine’s father who was a non Christian and he grew up I suppose as a wild child as the saying goes. He was fluent in Latin and taught Rhetoric. In the summer of 386 after he had read about the life of Saint Anthony of the Desert he converted to Christianity. When you think of the time period, to become a Christian was a huge step, and I think one that was often met with violence and death. Consider the time of each person, their life, their faith, and their desire to follow Jesus and mold themselves in His grace, love and compassion. We hopefully know and understand that Jesus commanded the apostles to take the Christian Faith and spread it throughout the known world. Christianity had spread to the British Isles and found favor with the Venerable Bede or Saint Bede. He was a noted author and scholar. He was a monk in the

Northumbrian monastery of St. Peter which is now located near Sunderland, England.

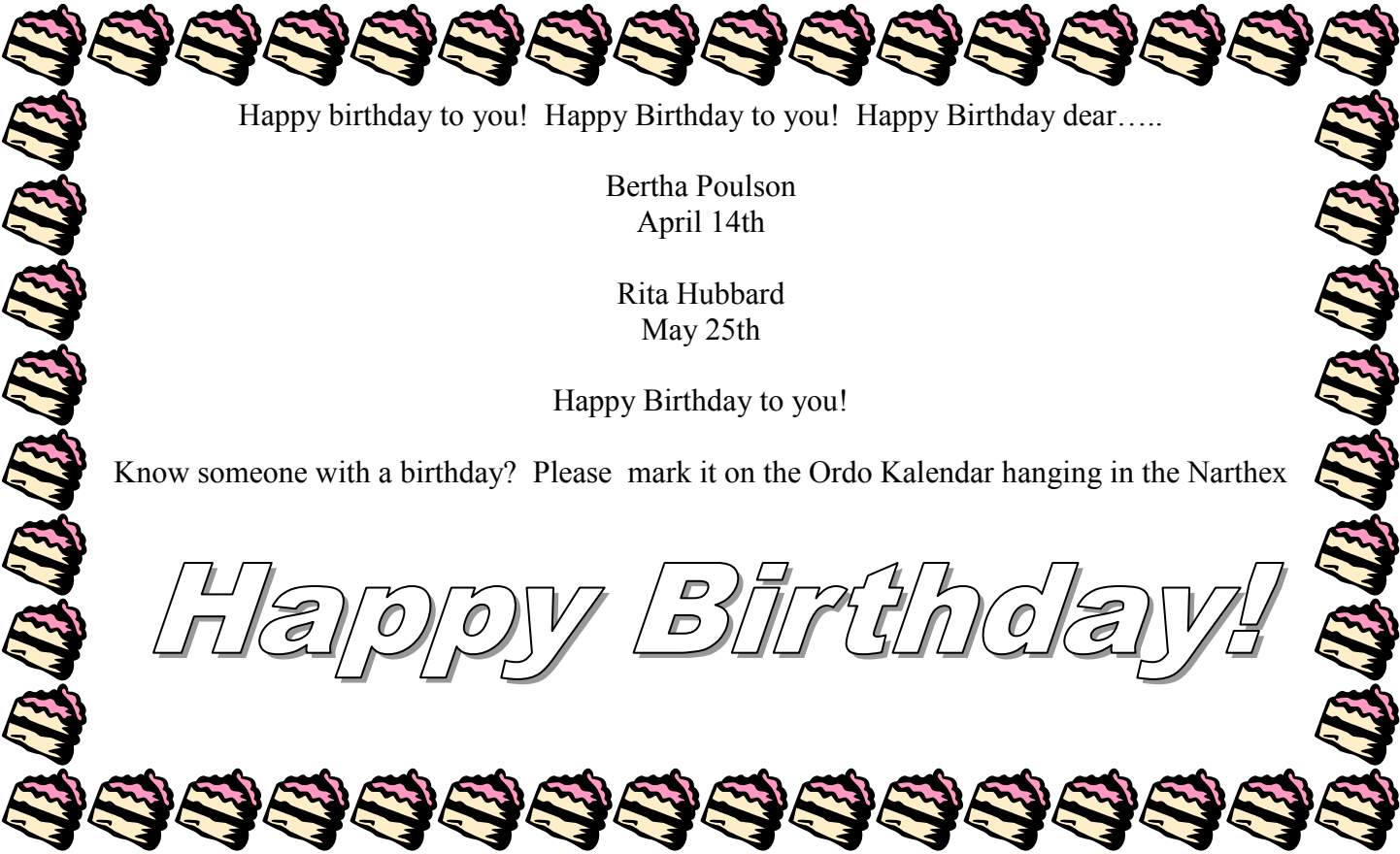
We take a big jump to that of St. John of the Cross who was a Doctor of Mystical Theology. The reason I say big jump is because we go from AD 354 to 1542, a big jump. As a youth twice he came near drowning and as he stated was saved by the Blessed Mother. He was attracted to the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, or Carmelites as they are better known. He entered the Order at the age of 21. When he was 25, he met St. Theresa of Avila who was then 52 and they both worked at reforming the Order. Both St. John and St. Theresa were contemplatives as many of us are called to be as well.

I realize that this process takes time, learning who these various saints were and just how their lives have affected us. I think that most everyone understands that it was our Lord who established His Church in AD 33. It was at the First Council of Nicea in AD 325 that we received the Nicene Creed that we say each and every Sunday, and yet, some will refuse to come close to the blessed sacrament. Both St. John as well as St. Theresa would have died for their faith and the sacrament. Can we do any less?

St. John is considered the Doctor of Mystical Theology. Is not God a mystery? Each and every time we come to receive that which Jesus gave us at the Institution of the Holy Eucharist Matthew 26: 17-15, Mark 14: 22-29 and in Luke 22: 15-20. As we read and learn of the lives of the many saints of the Church, are we any less capable of obtaining the same grace? I think so. I do think that many of us are challenged today what with iPods, phones, email etc, the challenge is defiantly there.

Had Jesus had all of this stuff in His day, I am sure the apostles would not have had to question where Jesus was as they all would have known. Each of the Saints had certain gifts to share, as each of you have. You just need to think of all that each of you have. Consider the saints we now have in this parish, Beth, Beryl, George, Lee, Mauve and Lou. May the souls of the faithful departed have mercy on us. Blessings and love to each of you

Fr. Joel+



Happy birthday to you! Happy Birthday to you! Happy Birthday dear.....

Bertha Poulson
April 14th

Rita Hubbard
May 25th

Happy Birthday to you!

Know someone with a birthday? Please mark it on the Ordo Kalendar hanging in the Narthex

Happy Birthday!



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