

March Agenda

4 March	Bible Study, 10:30am
6 March	Stations of the Cross, 6:30pm
11 March	Bible Study, 10:30am
13 March	Stations of the Cross, 6:30pm
18 March	Bible Study, 10:30am
20 March	Stations of the Cross, 6:30pm
25 March	Bible Study, 10:30am Feast of the Annunciation Low Mass, 7pm
27 March	Stations of the Cross, 6:30pm
28 March	Parish Cleanup Morning, 10am

New Brochure

A newly-revised color brochure is available in the back of the church, by the west doors, for use in advertising the parish.

Please take one (or two) to pass on to a friend (or two).

Standing Notices

The occasional Sacraments of Baptism, Matrimony, Confession, Communion and Unction of the Sick, and the Office of the Dead are always available by appointment, at announced times, or as necessary.

Please call or e-mail the Church Office or the Rectory to inform the clergy if you or a loved one is in hospital.

PLEASE REMEMBER THE PARISH IN YOUR WILL

The Anglican Church of S.
John the Baptist
PO Box 550
Marshall, VA 20116



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If you would like to contribute to this newsletter, please email:

Ecce@st-johnthebaptist.org

**The Anglican
Church
of
S. John the Baptist**

4107 Winchester Road
P.O. Box 550
Marshall, VA
20116-0550

Office: 540.364.2554
Rectory: 540.253.5113

www.st-johnthebaptist.org

ECCE

The Newsletter of S. John the Baptist Anglican Church
Marshall, Virginia
Issue 17 March 2009

Dear Family and Friends of S. John's,

Once again, we find ourselves entering the Lenten wilderness, following the example of Our Lord, who, before He began His public ministry, spent 40 days in fasting and prayer. The challenge for us, who claim to be His followers, is to use this time to ask some fundamental questions about ourselves and about our relationship with God. How well do we know ourselves? All too often we ignore this most basic question, and begin each day following the familiar routines we have laid out over the course of our lives. Lent forces us to pause in the midst of these routines and examine our character. What are our weaknesses, our challenges, our besetting sins? How will our Lenten rule help us to confront them and hopefully assist us in overcoming them? Perhaps we spend too much time working to make our lives comfortable. What will I give up this Lent to help me seek detachment from temporal things so that I might focus more clearly on eternal realities? Perhaps we have a besetting sin that we simply cannot overcome. What virtue can I begin to develop over Lent that will assist me in conquering this sin?

And what about our relationship with God; do we desire Him as we ought? If He created us for Himself, what in our lives do we use as a substitute for Him, our "false Gods?" We recite the Ten Commandments on the First Sunday of Lent, but how often do we relegate the commandment of "having no other gods before me" to an earlier, more primitive culture? Or perhaps when we hear the Summary of the Law Sunday after Sunday, we no longer pause to reflect on what it means to love God "with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

The goal of Lent is to enter in Holy Week with a deeper understanding of what Our Lord undertook for our sakes; to celebrate Easter with a greater love for the God who not only created us, but entered into our earthly existence to save us from ourselves. May we each use this time of Lent wisely so that come Easter, we may with a new appreciation of ourselves, and, more importantly a deeper love for Our Lord, enter into these sacred mysteries with a greater joy!

Affectionately, your Rector and friend,

From the Deacon's Dais

Many of us carry two serious misconceptions in our daily lives. The first is that people – especially young people - don't want to talk about God. The second is that discussions about God are only for church and funerals.

Now I am oversimplifying here and I mean to. This is because I would ask you to take a challenge. Put the misconceptions that I just mentioned on one end of a continuum. On the other end, put the Church's exhortation to constantly spread the Gospel. Let the words you've heard so often from the pulpit echo for a moment: "Talk to your friends, talk to your co-workers, talk to everyone about S. John's..." Now take some time to reflect where on this imaginary line you fall in your daily life.

People do want to talk about God – especially young people! The key is that people want to talk about God, not just listen to you talk about God. As my family can attest, I have trouble grasping that five word questions do not always need three thousand word answers complete with endnotes. But I can still offer some advice. God almost always comes up in conversation by way of a question, either a question about an immediate concern or a question about the world in general. This is why young people are so open to these conversations: they have not yet formed a calloused view of the world and thus much is interesting to them. So how do you start to talk about God? Ask a question.

We need not be in church or at a funeral to ask a question. Recently, my daughter and son-in-law opened up a computer gaming center. For twelve hours a day, zombies can be repelled, Space Marines can fight races from other worlds, World War II can be replayed, and World War III be played. While I helped with licensing, insurance and the like, I often found myself in conversation with other Christians because so many churches use all-night gaming to provide a drug- and alcohol-free environment on occasions like New Year's Eve.

We were able to discuss games, God, our kids, today's problems and much more. It is not my intention to reduce the discussion of God to video games, but to exhort the insertion of God further into our lives, and from thence into our conversation. The spark that lights the fire does not sustain it. Do not feel the need to be a theologian to bring up Our Lord. An honest person will always have the humility to say, "I can't answer that, but I can point you toward someone who can."

So many souls that have not darkened the door of a church in years are approaching another Easter knowing that something is missing in their lives. This longing is tinder waiting for a spark of Christian love that need not have every answer, but can certainly point the way.

And remember, with zombies, pick the shotgun...

The Rev'd Deacon John Needham

Transitus

On 22 February, fortified with the Sacraments, **Dorothy Duryee** passed into the next part of life. Please remember Nancy Dejerf and her family.

Kudos

To Gail Muller, Karen Parli and Fredricka Young for providing a wonderful repast for our Lenten suppers.

To J.T. McConnell for repairing the lights that illuminate our **new** outdoor church sign.

A Look at the Liturgy

One of the most certain ways to upset parishioners is to tamper with the liturgy. Only with fear and trepidation dare a rector introduce change in the time-honored worship of a parish. That being said, many of you will by now have discovered a *new* Mass booklet in the pews. Now before I go any further, perhaps we should all take a deep breath, count to ten and then read on.

First, I believe strongly that the parish liturgy should represent the timeless worship of the Church, as we have received it in the West. It should not be idiosyncratic, importing the rector's latest interests and innovations. When I came to S. John's, I noticed that there were many elements in the liturgy that were taken from Eastern Orthodoxy. While we can admire the beauty of the Liturgy of S. John Chrysostom, that is not our particular heritage, nor our ethos.

Second, our liturgy should conform to that of our larger Diocese, so that any priest from the Diocese of the Holy Cross, or from any Continuing Anglican jurisdiction for that matter, could step up to the altar and say a Mass with which he was familiar.

Third, as we claim to be a part of the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, our liturgy should reflect something of the tremendous wealth of our heritage. Many of you are aware of the Anglican indebtedness to the Oxford Movement, and the resulting restoration of the Western liturgy that came with that movement.

Fourth, many of you are also aware of the recent dramatic liturgical changes within the Roman Catholic Church, with the restoration of the so-called "Latin rite" at the parochial level. Benedict XVI recently allowed the 1962 Latin Mass to be said in any parish, without having to receive episcopal approval. The same Mass that has been said in traditional Anglican parishes for decades is now once again being said in many Roman Catholic parishes, albeit in Latin rather than in English. I would like to think the Holy Father was in part influenced by Anglican practice over the past century or so.

As a result, the new Mass booklet removes the idiosyncratic features of the liturgy as I inherited it and inserts a few items from the Anglican Missal that were never included. These include the nine-fold *Kyrie*, (Lord, have mercy - addressing the Father, Son and Holy Ghost each, thrice), the Gregorian Canon of the Mass (the Miles Coverdale translation of the Western canon used at the Salisbury Cathedral) and a three-fold recitation of the *Dómine, non sum dignus* (Lord, I am not worthy...), again addressing each member of Blessed Trinity, as we recognize the fullness of Our Lord's divinity in the sacred Host. In addition, the service music is included in its entirety, as well as another Mass setting (found in the 1940 Hymnal) by the famous Toronto organist, Healey Willan, and two sung settings for the Creed (also from the 1940 Hymnal), which we will introduce slowly and methodically. Other than that, the liturgy is our familiar 1928 Book of Common Prayer, along with my liturgical commentary. I pray this new booklet will help guide us into a deeper sense of communal worship whenever the Mass is celebrated at S. John's.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Christian Formation: Sundays, 9:30am

In March, we continue our discussion of contemporary challenges facing the Church and the culture. This class is strongly recommended for all who are new to the parish or who would not be prepared to "give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." *1 Peter 3:15*

Weekly Bible Study: Wed, 10:30am

Our Bible Study meets after Morning Prayer at 9:30am and Mass at 10am. Please join us for our study of S. John's Gospel and bring your friends.

Annunciation of the BVM:

We will celebrate the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary with Mass at 7pm on March 25.









Wednesday Night at the Movies:

On Wednesday, 11 March, we will meet at 7pm to watch and discuss the Russian film, *Ostrov*. Here is the Netflix summary: Father Anatoli lives a hermitlike existence in a remote Russian Orthodox monastery, where he's visited by people who believe he has the power to heal, see the future and exorcise demons. But Anatoli's odd behavior confuses his fellow monks, who are unaware that he's tortured by a past sin and considers himself an unworthy fraud.

Parish Clean-up Day: Sat, 28 Mar 10am

On the last Saturday of the month, we will gather after Morning Prayer for a general clean-up. After a rather windy winter and spring, quite a few branches have littered the grounds. In addition, we have a brush pile behind the church that is taking on Babel-like proportions, and which needs to be removed to the Warrenton dump. Please join us as we get the church and grounds prepared for Palm Sunday and Easter.

March 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 ✠ Lent I M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	2 feria M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	3 feria M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	4 St Casimir, C (Ember Day) Bible Study 10:30 M.P. 9.30am Mass 10.00am E.P. 5.30pm	5 feria M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	6  Ss Perpetua and Felicity, MM (Ember Day) M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	7 St Thomas Aquinas, CD (Ember Day) M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm
8 ✠ Lent II M.P. 9.00am SCF 9.30am Mass 10.30am	9 St Frances of Rome, W M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	10 Forty Martyrs of Sebaste M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	11 feria Bible Study 10:30 M.P. 9.30am Mass 10.00am E.P. 5.30pm WNM 7:00pm	12 St Gregory the Great M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	13  feria M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	14 feria M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm
15 ✠ Lent III M.P. 9.00am SCF 9.30am Mass 10.30am	16 feria M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	17 St Patrick, BC M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	18 S. Cyril of Jerusalem Bible Study 10:30 M.P. 9.30am Mass 10.00am E.P. 5.30pm	19 St Joseph M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	20  feria M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	21 S. Benedict M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm
22 ✠ Lent IV M.P. 9.00am SCF 9.30am Mass 10.30am	23 feria M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	24 St Gabriel the Archangel M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	25 ✠ Annunciation of the BVM Bible Study 10:30 M.P. 9.30am Mass 10.00am E.P. 5.30pm Mass 7.00pm	26 feria M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	27  St John of Damascus, CD M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	28 St John of Capistrano, C M.P. 9.30am Cleanup 10:00am E.P. 5.30pm
29 ✠ Passion Sunday M.P. 9.00am SCF 9.30am Mass 10.30am	30 feria M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	31 feria M.P. 9.30am E.P. 5.30pm	 ANNUNCIATION	 S. GREGORY	 S. BENEDICT	 S. THOMAS AQUINAS

Ab=Abbot; Ap=Apostle; B=Bishop; C=Confessor; Dn=Deacon; D=Doctor; Ev=Evangelist; K=King; M=Martyr; P=Pope; Pr=Priest;
Q=Queen; V=Virgin; W=Widow; SCF = School of Christian Formation; WNM = Wednesday Night at the Movies

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI
FOR LENT 2009

"He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry" (Mt 4,1-2)

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

At the beginning of Lent, which constitutes an itinerary of more intense spiritual training, the Liturgy sets before us again three penitential practices that are very dear to the biblical and Christian tradition – prayer, almsgiving, fasting – to prepare us to better celebrate Easter and thus experience God's power that, as we shall hear in the Paschal Vigil, "dispels all evil, washes guilt away, restores lost innocence, brings mourners joy, casts out hatred, brings us peace and humbles earthly pride" (*Paschal Præonium*). For this year's Lenten Message, I wish to focus my reflections especially on the value and meaning of fasting. Indeed, Lent recalls the forty days of our Lord's fasting in the desert, which He undertook before entering into His public ministry. We read in the Gospel: "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry" (Mt 4,1-2). Like Moses, who fasted before receiving the tablets of the Law (cf. Ex 34,28) and Elijah's fast before meeting the Lord on Mount Horeb (cf. 1 Kings 19,8), Jesus, too, through prayer and fasting, prepared Himself for the mission that lay before Him, marked at the start by a serious battle with the tempter.

We might wonder what value and meaning there is for us Christians in depriving ourselves of something that in itself is good and useful for our bodily sustenance. The Sacred Scriptures and the entire Christian tradition teach that fasting is a great help to avoid sin and all that leads to it. For this reason, the history of salvation is replete with occasions that invite fasting. In the very first pages of Sacred Scripture, the Lord commands man to abstain from partaking of the prohibited fruit: "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die" (Gn 2, 16-17). Commenting on the divine injunction, Saint Basil observes that "fasting was ordained in Paradise," and "the first commandment in this sense was delivered to Adam." He thus concludes: " 'You shall not eat' is a law of fasting and abstinence" (cf. *Sermo de jejuni*o: PG 31, 163, 98). Since all of us are weighed down by sin and its consequences, fasting is proposed to us as an instrument to restore friendship with God. Such was the case with Ezra, who, in preparation for the journey from exile back to the Promised Land, calls upon the assembled people to fast so that "we might humble ourselves before our God" (8,21). The Almighty heard their prayer and assured them of His favor and protection. In the same way, the people of Nineveh, responding to Jonah's call to repentance, proclaimed a fast, as a sign of their sincerity, saying: "Who knows, God may yet repent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we perish not?" (3,9). In this instance, too, God saw their works and spared them.

In the New Testament, Jesus brings to light the profound motive for fasting, condemning the attitude of the Pharisees, who scrupulously observed the prescriptions of the law, but whose hearts were far from

God. True fasting, as the divine Master repeats elsewhere, is rather to do the will of the Heavenly Father, who “sees in secret, and will reward you” (Mt 6,18). He Himself sets the example, answering Satan, at the end of the forty days spent in the desert that “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Mt 4,4). The true fast is thus directed to eating the “true food,” which is to do the Father’s will (cf. Jn 4,34). If, therefore, Adam disobeyed the Lord’s command “of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat,” the believer, through fasting, intends to submit himself humbly to God, trusting in His goodness and mercy.

The practice of fasting is very present in the first Christian community (cf. Acts 13,3; 14,22; 27,21; 2 Cor 6,5). The Church Fathers, too, speak of the force of fasting to bridle sin, especially the lusts of the “old Adam,” and open in the heart of the believer a path to God. Moreover, fasting is a practice that is encountered frequently and recommended by the saints of every age. Saint Peter Chrysologus writes: “Fasting is the soul of prayer, mercy is the lifeblood of fasting. So if you pray, fast; if you fast, show mercy; if you want your petition to be heard, hear the petition of others. If you do not close your ear to others, you open God’s ear to yourself” (*Sermo* 43: PL 52, 320. 322).

In our own day, fasting seems to have lost something of its spiritual meaning, and has taken on, in a culture characterized by the search for material well-being, a therapeutic value for the care of one’s body. Fasting certainly brings benefits to physical well-being, but for believers, it is, in the first place, a “therapy” to heal all that prevents them from conformity to the will of God. In the Apostolic Constitution *Pænitentini* of 1966, the Servant of God Paul VI saw the need to present fasting within the call of every Christian to “no longer live for himself, but for Him who loves him and gave himself for him ... he will also have to live for his brethren” (cf. Ch. I). Lent could be a propitious time to present again the norms contained in the Apostolic Constitution, so that the authentic and perennial significance of this long held practice may be rediscovered, and thus assist us to mortify our egoism and open our heart to love of God and neighbor, the first and greatest Commandment of the new Law and compendium of the entire Gospel (cf. Mt 22, 34-40).

The faithful practice of fasting contributes, moreover, to conferring unity to the whole person, body and soul, helping to avoid sin and grow in intimacy with the Lord. Saint Augustine, who knew all too well his own negative impulses, defining them as “twisted and tangled knottiness” (*Confessions*, II, 10.18), writes: “I will certainly impose privation, but it is so that he will forgive me, to be pleasing in his eyes, that I may enjoy his delightfulness” (*Sermo* 400, 3, 3: PL 40, 708). Denying material food, which nourishes our body, nurtures an interior disposition to listen to Christ and be fed by His saving word. Through fasting and praying, we allow Him to come and satisfy the deepest hunger that we experience in the depths of our being: the hunger and thirst for God.

At the same time, fasting is an aid to open our eyes to the situation in which so many of our brothers and sisters live. In his First Letter, Saint John admonishes: “If anyone has the world’s goods, and sees his broth-

er in need, yet shuts up his bowels of compassion from him – how does the love of God abide in him?” (3,17). Voluntary fasting enables us to grow in the spirit of the Good Samaritan, who bends low and goes to the help of his suffering brother (cf. *Encyclical Deus caritas est*, 15). By freely embracing an act of self-denial for the sake of another, we make a statement that our brother or sister in need is not a stranger. It is precisely to keep alive this welcoming and attentive attitude towards our brothers and sisters that I encourage the parishes and every other community to intensify in Lent the custom of private and communal fasts, joined to the reading of the Word of God, prayer and almsgiving. From the beginning, this has been the hallmark of the Christian community, in which special collections were taken up (cf. 2 Cor 8-9; Rm 15, 25-27), the faithful being invited to give to the poor what had been set aside from their fast (*Didascalia Ap.*, V, 20,18). This practice needs to be rediscovered and encouraged again in our day, especially during the liturgical season of Lent.

From what I have said thus far, it seems abundantly clear that fasting represents an important ascetical practice, a spiritual arm to do battle against every possible disordered attachment to ourselves. Freely chosen detachment from the pleasure of food and other material goods helps the disciple of Christ to control the appetites of nature, weakened by original sin, whose negative effects impact the entire human person. Quite opportunely, an ancient hymn of the Lenten liturgy exhorts: “*Utamur ergo parcus, / verbis cibis et potibus, / somno, iocis et arctius / perstemus in custodia* – Let us use sparingly words, food and drink, sleep and amusements. May we be more alert in the custody of our senses.”

Dear brothers and sisters, it is good to see how the ultimate goal of fasting is to help each one of us, as the Servant of God Pope John Paul II wrote, to make the complete gift of self to God (cf. *Encyclical Veritatis splendor*, 21). May every family and Christian community use well this time of Lent, therefore, in order to cast aside all that distracts the spirit and grow in whatever nourishes the soul, moving it to love of God and neighbor. I am thinking especially of a greater commitment to prayer, *lectio divina*, recourse to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and active participation in the Eucharist, especially the Holy Sunday Mass. With this interior disposition, let us enter the penitential spirit of Lent. May the Blessed Virgin Mary, *Causa nostrae laetitiae*, accompany and support us in the effort to free our heart from slavery to sin, making it evermore a “living tabernacle of God.” With these wishes, while assuring every believer and ecclesial community of my prayer for a fruitful Lenten journey, I cordially impart to all of you my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican,

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI