

CHAPEL CHIMES

March, 2009
Editor: Simone Carneiro

Do you say a special prayer before each family meal?



Dear Friends,

It is already March. Carnival is past (and I hope you could get away and rest) and Lent is here to gain our spiritual strength and prepare for Easter and Holy Week at O.L.H.C.

With the world economy so poor, I think most of you are already sacrificing in some way. Lent is that time to join our small sacrifices and sufferings with Christ who died for our salvation. What are we doing to remind us of his love for each of us? Fasting, prayer, alms giving? The Church leaves it up to each of us to select some way of making the forty days of Lent a sacrifice.

Is your family aware of the meaning of Lent? Do you say a special prayer before each family meal? Do you remind yourselves why we have Lent of forty days before Holy Week and Easter?

I am here at Chapel praying for you all each day and remembering your special intentions. Pray for my brother Bernard who at 88 in the Canadian Arctic is reduced to walking only with crutches. Let us pray for one another each day.

God bless you and your family.

Father Tom, O.M.I.

Mass Schedule:

- Monday & Wednesday at 7:15 am
 - Friday at 8:15am Mothers and Others
 - Saturdays at 6:30pm
 - Sundays at 10:30am
 - Last Sunday of month 10:30am and 6:30pm
- Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Half-hour prior to each and every Mass; and by appointment

Key Dates for March 2009

March 28—Saturday
12:00 to 4:00 p.m. - International Festival

March 29—Sunday
10:30 a.m.— Rite of Signation

About Lent

The key to understanding the meaning of Lent is simple: **Baptism**. Preparation for Baptism and for renewing baptismal commitment lies at the heart of the season. Since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has reemphasized the baptismal character of Lent, especially through the restoration of the Catechumenate and its Lenten rituals. Our challenge today is to renew our understanding of this important season of the Church year and to see how we can integrate our personal practices into this renewed perspective.



Why is Baptism so important in our Lenten understanding? Lent as a 40-day season developed in the fourth century from three merging sources. The first was the ancient paschal fast that began as a two-day observance before Easter but was gradually lengthened to 40 days. The second was the catechumenate as a process of preparation for Baptism, including an intense period of preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation to be celebrated at Easter. The third was the Order of Penitents, which was modeled on the catechumenate and sought a second conversion for those who had fallen back into serious sin after Baptism. As the catechumens (candidates for Baptism) entered their final period of preparation for Baptism, the penitents and the rest of the community accompanied them on their journey and prepared to renew their baptismal vows at Easter.

Lent, then, is radically baptismal. In this Update we'll consider some of the familiar customs of Lent and show how we can renew some of our Lenten customs to bring forth the baptismal theme.

Ashes

Ash Wednesday liturgies are some of the best attended in the entire year. Some people suggest that is just because the Church is giving out something free, but I suspect there are deeper reasons! Ashes are an ancient symbol of repentance (sackcloth and ashes). They also remind us of our mortality ("remember that you are dust") and thus of the day when we will stand before God and be judged. This can be linked easily to the death and resurrection motif of Baptism. To prepare well for the day we die, we must die now to sin and rise to new life in Christ. Being marked with ashes at the beginning of Lent indicates our recognition of the need for deeper conversion of our lives during this season of renewal.

Giving something up

For most older Catholics, the first thought that Lent brings to mind is giving something up. In my childhood, the standard was to give up candy, a discipline that found suitable reward in the baskets of sugary treats we received on Easter. Some of us even added to the Easter surplus by saving candy all through Lent, stockpiling what we would have eaten had we not promised to give it up.

Some years ago a friend of mine told me that he had urged his children to move beyond giving up candy to giving up some habit of sin that marked their lives. About halfway through Lent he asked the children how they were doing with their Lenten promise. One of his young sons had promised to give up fighting with his brothers and sisters during Lent. When his father asked him how it was going, the boy replied, "I'm doing pretty good, Dad—but boy, I can't wait until Easter!"

That response indicates that this boy had only partly understood the purpose of Lenten "giving up." Lent is about conversion, turning our lives more completely over to Christ and his way of life. That always involves giving up sin in some form. The goal is not just to abstain from sin for the duration of Lent but to root sin out of our lives forever. Conversion means leaving behind an old way of living and acting in order to embrace new life in Christ. For catechumens, Lent is a period intended to bring their initial conversion to completion.

Pray for our Confirmation Candidates

On May 9, 2009, fourteen Chapel students who will have completed the Confirmation Program will be confirmed here at Chapel School. The group, which is made up of 9th, 10th and 11th graders has been meeting afterschool since September 2008. Just recently, they completed a full day retreat on a beautiful, warm Saturday at Chapel. Even though they arrived blurry-eyed and would have preferred to have been at the beach taking in the warm sun, they all participated in the workshops/group activities, laughed and listened to Nathaniel Fawcett, a youth pastor who gave the keynote speech on what it means to be "holy", reverently partook of the sacrament of confession/reconciliation and ended the day with a liturgy that they themselves created for their friends and family. All in all, a full and rewarding day.

The year together has been an experience of community and spiritual growth. Understanding the decision to confirm their faith and live a life that manifests that faith in concrete ways – not only in their own lives, but as examples to others – can be frightening but is also truly exciting and rewarding. The commitment to live a Christian life, to consciously and willingly choose to put into practice the Greatest Commandment to "...love God with all your heart with all your soul, and with all your mind... and love your neighbor as yourself" *Matthew 22:37-40* is a defining moment. Please pray for our Confirmation Candidates as they prepare to come into the Church fully on May 9, 2009. Our Confirmation Candidates are: Ana Laura Mendoza, Melissa Torres, Caroline Kurzweil, Caio Feola, Thomas de Abreu, Lucas Oliveira, Lukas Höefig, Andrea Mameri, Maria Victoria Carotti, Taylor Olibarria, Juan Gesino, Isabel Serrano, Maria Fernanda Salazar and Giovanna di Cameli.

Blessings and peace,

Fr. Thomas Brown, OMI
Emily Linden Moses, Confirmation Coordinator



Parish Contacts

Parish Council: José Arana 4138.8000

arana@transway.com.br

Finance: open

Communications: Simone Carneiro 8432.8050

simone.brazil@terra.com.br

Liturgy: Karla Duffy 5548-9814

kabreu@chapelschool.com

Elisabeth Oliveira 5564-5134

eoliveira@chapelschool.com

Outreach: Antonio Esteve 5687-1944

aesteve@ecomtrading.com

Ligia Domingues 5696-4335

Ligiam.cd@uol.com.br

Religious Instruction: Katrina Ting

katrina@uol.com.br