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Saint Paul

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

A Conversion of Heart The RCIA Process

Chris Orłowski was baptized in the Catholic Church, but growing up, he and his family were not practicing Catholics. When he met and eventually married a devout “cradle Catholic” shortly after college, Chris began attending Mass with his wife. After years of regular Mass attendance, Chris developed a desire to learn more about the Church and discern the celebration of his remaining Sacraments of Initiation. He began participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) process here at St. Paul.

“It was just an evolution of attending Mass every Sunday for six, seven, eight years, and also some people we became friends with were faithful Catholics,” Chris explains. “I saw the teachings of the Church and the benefits it brought us, and the benefits it brought our friends, and just became a believer over time.

“We have two sons, and our oldest one is in second grade this year, so he is going to be receiving his First Communion. I thought, ‘What better time to go through this process and get confirmed, and to share this with my son, than this year?’”

In addition to the numerous rites in which Chris and his fellow candidates and catechumens participated throughout the RCIA process, they also learned about the tenets of the Faith, its sacraments, its traditions, and its theological principles. They enjoyed fellowship with one another and had opportunities for prayer and reflection throughout the process. All the while, they were led by volunteer



Chris Orłowski recently completed the RCIA process, culminating in his Confirmation in January.

RCIA Team members and accompanied by individual sponsors – confirmed Catholics who served as brothers and sisters of faith in their respective journeys, and answered any questions they might have had along the way.

“I’m military, so we’ve been moving every couple of years for the last 15 years, and we’ve been involved in many different parishes,” Chris says. “It’s been easier to go through the process here because, more so than in some other parishes I’ve been to, it’s a very energetic, faithful, and involved parish community that we have here at St. Paul. And with that type of environment and those types of people surrounding us, it makes being involved and wanting to learn that much easier.”

In January, Chris celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation, and entered into full communion with the Catholic Church. He says receiving the sacramental graces of Con-

Dying He Destroyed Our Death, Rising He Restored Our Life

“He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.” – Apostle’s Creed

As we come to the end of our Lenten journey toward Easter, let us take a moment to meditate on three pivotal lines from the ancient creed, which comprise the central events of our redemption.

Far from being a mere myth or legend, in Jerusalem around the year 30 A.D., Jesus Christ – the Son of God made man – was tortured at the hands of the Romans. He was flogged, beaten, spit upon, and crowned with thorns. He was made to carry the cross through the crowded streets to Golgotha and, once there, He was crucified: He was nailed to a cross and died. Just as some day we will each be laid in our graves, Jesus was laid in His.

The most obvious question that confronts the observer of this horrific reality is “why?” Luckily, Christ made the impetus for His self-sacrifice quite clear: “Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life” (Jn 3:14-15).

The reasons Christ died on the cross are twofold, one negative and one positive. The negative cause is sin. Only in witnessing the cost of redemption – the death of the Son of God – can we begin to comprehend the profound magnitude of sin: “You were bought with a price,” says St. Paul (1 Cor 6:20).

Conversely, Christ willingly accepted the cross because of love. St. John famously says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life” (Jn 3:16).

Uniting these two causes, St. Paul says, “God proves His love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8).

In His limitless compassion, Christ entered into the fullness of human suffering – physical torment, emotional agony and utter isolation – so that He might share complete solidarity with mankind. Accordingly, His passion and death not only accomplished our redemption, but by the cross He also showed us the way to true discipleship. For Christ taught His disciples long before His crucifixion, “if anyone wishes



to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Lk 9:23).

Christ’s is the final and perfect covenant between God and Man, and it is a covenant of love, with Christ Himself as its high priest. Nevertheless, this covenant is not based on love as popular culture conceives of it, but love as Christ displayed it: “The way we came to know love was that He laid down His life for us” (1 John 3:16).

Joined with the Passion, Christ’s resurrection is the key to the entire Gospel; for in rising from the dead Jesus proved true His bold promises. He had prophesied to the apostles, “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it

down, and power to take it up again” (Jn 10:18). The resurrection vindicates this promise and validates His teaching and miracles.

Furthermore, Christ, “the firstborn from the dead,” opened the door to eternal life and to new creation (Col 1:18). Out of the darkness of despair, the scattered and frightened disciples saw the risen Christ and were renewed and transformed. Filled with faith in the crucified and resurrected Savior they evangelized the known world.

St. Paul summarizes the centrality of the redemptive power of the Easter Triduum with his characteristic zeal:

“If Christ has not been raised, then empty (too) is our preaching; empty, too, your faith. Then we are also false witnesses to God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins” (1 Cor 15:14-17).

This Easter, let us respond to the glory of Christ’s resurrection by exclaiming, as St. Thomas the Apostle did, “My Lord and my God!” And, may each of us be filled with faith in the God of our salvation, hope in the rewards He has won for us, and love for Him who has deigned to bestow them on us.

Easter: The Ultimate Foundation of Stewardship

Dear Parishioners,

How do you feel at the end of the Palm Sunday Mass each year? Have you ever noticed the abrupt shift of tone during the course of that liturgy? It begins with great joy, as we celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem to the acclamation of the crowds. But then the mood swings to sorrow, despair even, when the Passion Gospel is read, for we hear those same crowds shouting, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" a few days later.

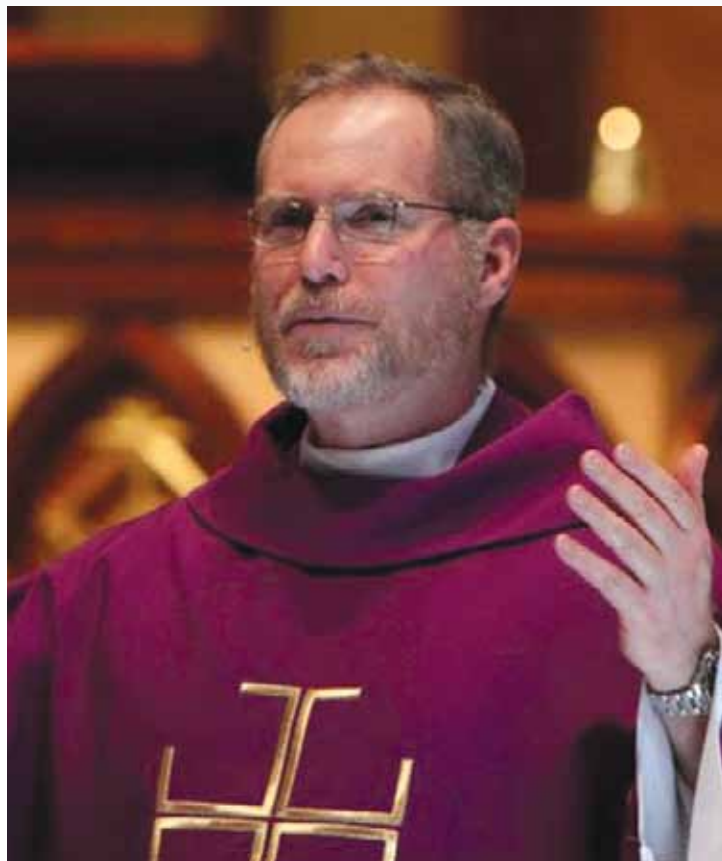
Palm Sunday, of course, begins Holy Week, the most important week in the Christian year. The confusion of conflicting moods is spread through the week, especially during the Easter Triduum from sundown Holy Thursday to sundown Easter Sunday.

Holy Thursday offers us the glorious Mass of the Lord's Supper celebrating the institution of the Eucharist before we pass to the sadness of the betrayal and arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The next day brings us the Good Friday Liturgy of the Passion with our recognition of what our sins did to the Incarnate Son of God. Then, after a day of waiting as we mourn Jesus' burial and repose in the tomb, we celebrate His victory over sin, Satan, and death at the Easter Vigil on Saturday night or at the Masses the next day. If we have participated in all the main services of the Triduum, we arrive at Sunday evening exhausted but joyful.

This year, Palm Sunday falls on the first day of April, so we observe Holy Week and Easter Sunday early in the month. That means we will spend most of April in the Easter Season, a period filled with joy and thanksgiving. Our gladness comes not only because Christ rose from the dead but also because we benefit from it. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (§654) puts it, "The Paschal mystery has two aspects: by His death, Christ liberates us from sin; by His Resurrection, He opens for us the way to a new life."

In other words, Christ's Resurrection is the source of our own future resurrection. St. Paul wrote about it to the Romans in the following words (Rom 6:5): "For if we have grown into union with Him through a death like His, we shall also be united with Him in the resurrection."

Eternal life in union with Christ – a hope for a new life beginning now and extending on into heaven – is the result of Jesus' Resurrection. What greater grounds for thanksgiving can there be than this Easter hope? We should sing with joy about this promise from God!



And how do we show our joy and our gratitude to God for this amazing gift He has given us? We join in worship, and praise God by word and song. We share the Good News of Jesus' victory over death with our family, friends, and neighbors. And we offer back to the Lord a portion of the time, talent, and treasure He has entrusted to us. Yes, the Easter message that we share in the benefits of Christ's resurrection is the ultimate foundation for all Christian stewardship.

The Lord is risen, alleluia!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Doug Halsema
Pastor

Parish Ministry Sa



There seems to be one common denominator for great parish fellowship: delicious food.

Aware of this recipe for success, our parish's Fellowship Suppers Ministry has been hosting monthly meals for the community since 2006.

"We start up each September after the schools and religious education programs are back in session, and do our last dinner in April before the busy end-of-the-year events start to pick up," says Jackie Dickinson, who coordinates the ministry with her husband, John.

With a regular attendance of at least 200 parishioners, and more than 400 for special dinners such as Thanksgiving and St. Patrick's Day, each Fellowship Supper represents a sizable undertaking.

*"Helping with
great way for
time and talent
love the fe*

—Tara Mann, m

"When we were first asked to get it started, it was a little nerve-racking," Jackie recalls. "But my husband John was willing to head up all the cooking, and I took on coordinating the volunteers. We have such an abundance of people that are always ready to volunteer in every ministry here at St. Paul, so it's never been a problem."

A few days before the dinner is to be held, Jackie coordinates a "Potato Peeling Social," where volunteers each bring a cutting board, peeler, and a sharp knife, and spend an hour peeling potatoes and visiting.

On the day of the dinner, the first volunteer crew shows up around 3:30 p.m. to get the dining room set up in the parish center. From 4:30-7 p.m., two crews run the register, buffet line, and kitchen.

"Other than some of the desserts we prepare, all the food is made from



ays, “Bon Appétit!”

scratch each month, so it’s a pretty big undertaking,” Jackie says. “John runs the food side of it and, truly, I don’t know how he does it. But the Holy Spirit always provides! We couldn’t do it with out all of the wonderful volunteers. We really look forward to the fellowship we get to share with them, and with all those who attend.”

The volunteers have a ball working together and interacting with each other and those attending.

“Helping with the dinners is a great way for me to share my time and talents, and I really love the fellowship,” says Tara Mann, who volunteers to help out in the buffet line each month. “I get to talk to people I don’t often see on Sundays at Mass, and say ‘Hi’ to all the people coming through the line. Plus, it’s nice to not have to cook one night out of the month, and my kids love it!”

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fellowship.”*

ministry volunteer

Menu items range from pork loin, grilled chicken, and spaghetti to special items like corned beef and cabbage in March and turkey in November. At \$7 a meal for adults and \$3 for children 12 and under, with a maximum of \$25 per family, you can hardly beat the price either!

Each month, all of the extra food is sent to local charities including Loaves and Fishes, Appetite for Life, and Baptist Children’s Home.

The next Fellowship Supper will be held April 25 from 5-7 p.m. in the parish center. As it is the final supper until September, be sure to mark your calendar and bring the whole family out for a great meal and a wonderful time of fellowship!



In the Hands of the Father

Men of St. Joseph

Men of St. Joseph is a different kind of prayer group. “We meet and we concentrate on our spiritual growth for the betterment of our families and the parish as a whole,” says Mike Mangrum, who helped start the group at St. Paul. “The guys who attend the Men of St. Joseph are choosing and making that statement: ‘I want to grow, and I want a relationship with God.’”

Men of St. Joseph is a weekly men’s ministry in which members dedicate themselves to becoming the spiritual leaders of their families through prayer, Bible study, and spiritual formation.

“The Bible tells us that we are to be the leaders, examples and role models for our kids,” Mike says. “We’re taking that seriously.”

The main purpose of the ministry is for married men to become strong leaders of their families. However, it is also open to single men of all ages.

“You don’t have to be a husband or father,” Mike says. “If you want a close relationship with your Creator and a relationship with other men, this is a great time to do it.”

There are two opportunities to attend the meetings each week: Mondays at 7:30 p.m. and Tuesdays at 6 a.m. These meetings take place in the cafetorium.

The ministry got its start in June 2009. Mike and a few other parishioners had heard, through different channels, about a Men of St. Joseph group at a parish in Mobile, Ala. They decided to start a chapter of the ministry here at St. Paul,

and a small delegation from Mobile came to help them organize and facilitate the first ministry meeting.

“For a lot of us, there was this starving need,” Mike says. “Men were looking for an outlet or source for regular scripture study, and the accountability and experience of other men who they could rely on.”

Men of St. Joseph has provided that source of support for its members.

There are no official facilitators for the group.

Two members are responsible for leading the meetings, and they rotate each month. That accountability is helping to make the members into strong Catholic men.

“They’re the ones who everyone is looking to, they’re starting the prayers,” Mike says. “That responsibility has impacted these guys.”

The group has also helped create and foster lasting friendships among the men who participate.

“It’s created a real sense of community,” Mike says. “Not only are different age groups present, but different back-



“For a lot of us, there was this starving need. Men were looking for an outlet or source for regular scripture study, and the accountability and experience of other men that they can rely on.”

– Mike Mangrum

continued on page 7

continued from previous page

grounds and different work. My closest friends at church now are probably the men I've met in or through the Men of St. Joseph."

And while the Men of St. Joseph ministry's main goal is to strengthen its members as the spiritual leaders of their families, its influence doesn't stop there.

"This is something I'm going to do every week for my wife and my family – whatever," Mike says. "I'm going to become a better man so I can influence those around me. I think it's made a big difference in our parish."

For more information about Men of St. Joseph, please call Mike Mangrum at 850-748-2264.



Holy Week 2012

Palm Sunday, April 1

Masses at 7 a.m., 9 a.m., 11 a.m., & 6 p.m.
Easter Egg Hunt after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Gazebo

April 2 & 3

Mass at 8:30 a.m.

April 4

Mass at 8:30 a.m.
Confessions at 6:30 p.m.

Holy Thursday, April 5

Mass of Our Lord's Supper at 7 p.m.
Adoration at 9 p.m.

Good Friday, April 6

Stations of the Cross: noon & 7 p.m.
Lord's Passion at 3 p.m.

Holy Saturday, April 7

Easter Vigil Mass at 8:30 p.m.

Easter Sunday, April 8

Masses at 7 a.m., 9 a.m., 11 a.m. & 6 p.m.





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The RCIA Process continued from cover

firmation was a very meaningful experience for him, and he hopes his RCIA journey serves as an example for his children as they grow in their own faith lives.

“To receive the Holy Spirit like that was a powerful and joyful experience, and I was very happy to have gone through it,” he says. “With my son Mitchell going through sacramental preparation himself, I thought this would be a perfect opportunity to demonstrate through my actions that I thought this was important; not just sending him to Catholic school and saying it’s important, but also going to class every Wednesday night, having him there for my Confirmation, and just reinforcing that his mother and I take this seriously, and that this is a way of life.”

Currently, the remaining members of the RCIA class of 2012 are making their final preparations for the Sacraments of Initiation, which will be celebrated at the Easter Vigil, April 7. For Rick Danner, RCIA coordi-

nator at St. Paul, this culmination of the RCIA journey is bittersweet, but it is also what he most looks forward to each year.

“For me, and I know for my team, it’s a very tiring process, so we’re almost kind of glad because we’re at an end,” Rick says. “But at the same time, we realize we’ve got them to where they need to be, and we kind of have to surrender – our job is done, and God has to pick up where we’ve left off. And that, of course, requires an abundant amount of prayer.”

Please pray for our candidates and catechumens as they take the final steps in their journey toward full communion with the Church. If you are interested in more information about the RCIA process, or would like to volunteer as a RCIA Team member or sponsor, please visit the St. Paul website at www.stpaulcatholic.net, or contact Rick Danner at 850-434-2551, ext. 131 or RCIA@stpaulcatholic.net.

Liturgy Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 4:30 p.m. | **Sunday:** 7:00, 9:00, 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m. | **Daily Mass:** Monday-Saturday, 8:30 a.m.

Confessions: Saturdays, 9:00 a.m., 3:30 p.m. - 4:15 p.m., 1st Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m., and by appointment

Eucharistic Adoration: Thursday 9:00 a.m. until Friday 7:30 a.m.