

The Wingèd Bull

Monthly Newsletter of
St. Luke Anglican Catholic Church
Augusta, Georgia



February 2015

Preparing for Lent

Please set aside some prayerful quiet time between Septuagesima on February 1st to Shrove Tuesday on February 17th. Use this time to reflect on your duties as a Christian and your needs as a follower of Christ. What will your Lenten discipline be this year? Do you have more money than time? Perhaps you should give for missions rather than try to attend every service. Do you have diabetes and many pills you must take with food? Then you must not try to fast rigorously.

Honor your Lord God by thoughtfully considering what your spiritual plan will be for the six-and-a-half weeks of Lent. Will you read a spiritual book? Will you make an extra Mass? Will you pray one of the three Divine Offices (Mattins and Evensong) offered at the parish? Will you give to the poor? for mission? Will you see a priest to make your confession? Will you read Scripture? Will you sing a special hymn? Reflect, O Christian, upon your soul and your God. How will you spiritually work this Lent so your life is more devoted to God and you feel closer to him?

Ask your rector and his assistants for help. Priests have training and experience, and your own clergy know you better than strangers. Most importantly, priests have spiritual graces poured into them by the Holy Ghost. Even though as men they are weak, they are supernaturally strengthened and then provided to you by God so that you may worship him all the better.

Most importantly, prepare to grow closer to God this Lent. Jesus loves you, and He wants you to love the Father like He does. The more you work with our Triune God to make a devout and holy

Lent, the more wonderful and lovely Easter morning will be when it comes in some 70 days.

Our New Officers

The vestry met after Mass on January 11th and elected our new officers for 2015.

Mr. Jeff O'Betz succeeds Mrs. Frances Martin as Senior Warden, commonly called the priest's warden.

Mr. Gary Hegner succeeds Mr. Ted Baker as Junior Warden, commonly called the people's warden.

Dr. C. Thomas Rezner succeeds Mrs. Gladys Fox as Treasurer.

Mrs. Lisa Labbe-O'Betz succeeds Miss Naomi Williams as Secretary.

Stop when you meet them and let them know you appreciate their service. The Church is different than all other human institutions because it is also divine. This makes Church work both more difficult and more rewarding. So be sure to let our new officers know that you will be praying for them. And volunteer to help them out. Who knows? You just might have the expertise, insight, or experience that they were looking for!

Burning Palms for Ashes

Perhaps you have never thought of it, but the blessed palm branches you received on Palm Sunday last year were not for your permanent possession. They were meant to be burned. Like the Christian Year, our blessed palms have a holy cycle.

Pre-lent is time to return your old palm branches from last year. We will burn these palms together after Mass on Quinquagesima, February 15th, to make the ashes imposed on the faithful later that week on Ash Wednesday.

And then, after five weeks without palms, you will receive your freshly blessed palm branches come Palm Sunday.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

On Tuesday, February 17th, St. Luke Church will host our annual Shrove Tuesday pancake supper from 6:30 to 8:30 pm in Holy Cross Memorial Hall. We had a lovely spread last year, and many people enjoyed a good time. Please invite your friends, family, and neighbors to join you in one last bash before entering into the holy season of Lent. If you get enough pancakes in your belly on Tuesday, fasting on Wednesday won't be so onerous!

If you would like to help with the supper, please ask Mr. Gary Hegner or Mrs. Barbara Elmy. Look out for more information in the coming weeks.

Confessions

Fr. Otwell will be available for Confessions before the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper at 4 pm, before the evening Mass of Ash Wednesday at 5 pm, and by appointment. The word "shrove" in "Shrove Tuesday" is a past tense verb meaning "to confess one's sins" and "to grant absolution for sins".

God has given you priests to assist in the ministry of reconciliation between God and Man. God has given you sacraments to assuredly and without question give you heavenly graces from on high which far surpass whatever kindnesses you can find in the world. Anglican Catholics must confess our sins before receiving Holy Communion, but we are not required to confess our sins to a priest in Sacramental Confession.

But it is here and available to you to repair the damage done to your relationship with God by sinning.

"By the cross we, too, are crucified with Christ; but alive in Christ. We are no more rebels, but servants; no more servants, but sons!"

- Frederic William Farrar

Parish Workday

We will have two parish workdays focused on the grounds of the parish on the third Saturdays of February and March: February 21st and March 21st. The workdays will begin at 8 am and run until noon, but all are welcome for whatever length of time people wish to work. If you wish to work 8-10, 9-noon, or anytime between 8 am and noon, you are welcome! Please bring your gloves, wear appropriate clothing, wear a hat/sunscreen, and whatever else you need.

Our junior warden, Mr. Gary Hegner, will direct us for these events. If you would like to contact him ahead of time, you may call his cell phone on the day of the event at 540.875.8768 or his home prior to event at 706.329.7103.

Gary will spray out grasses in certain places ahead of the February workday. Then we will work on the following things:

- Cut back and transplant liriopie to various areas, especially the upsloped area between church property and property above, from cluster near driveway, and near parking lot and entrance to parish hall
- Transplant nandinas from wooded area to location around back of church
- Add pine straw to azalea beds near front parking lot and church

- Clean area in landscape beds towards street
- Clean out shed and dispose of junk; clean debris off shed
- Cut back crape myrtles near back portion of parking lot
- And other tasks to be determined.

In our worship, learning, and social activities, we tend to relate to each other either front-to-back or front-to-front. Work alongside your brothers and sisters is a great way to serve God side-by-side.

About Attending Church

By St. John Chrysostom

Why don't you attend church?

Despite all this, few people come to church. How grievous! We run eagerly to dances and amusements. We listen with pleasure to the foolishness of singers. We enjoy the foul words of actors for hours without getting bored. And yet when God speaks we yawn, we scratch ourselves and feel dizzy. Most people would run rabidly to the horse track, although there's no roof there to protect the audience from rain, even when it rains heavily or when the wind is lifting everything. They don't mind the bad weather or the cold or the distance. Nothing keeps them in their homes. When they are about to go to church, however, then the soft rain becomes an obstacle to them. And if you ask them who Amos or Obadiah is, or how many prophets or apostles there are, they can't even open their mouths. Yet they can tell you every detail about the horses, the singers and the actors. What kind of state is this?

We celebrate the memories of saints, and almost no one appears in the church. It seems that the distance sways the Christians to negligence. Or rather, not the distance, but just negligence prevents them. Because, as nothing can deter him who has a good disposition and zeal to do something, so also everything can deter the

negligent one, the indolent one, and the one who puts things off.

The martyrs shed their blood for the Truth, and are you concerned about such a little distance [to the church]? They sacrificed their lives for Christ, and you don't want to toil even a little? The Lord died for your sake, and are you too bored to come to church, preferring to stay at your house? Nevertheless, you must come, to see the devil being defeated, the saint winning, God being glorified, and the Church triumphing.

"But I am a sinner," you say, "and I don't dare gaze at the saint." Precisely because you are a sinner, come here, to become righteous. Or maybe don't you know that they who stand before the sacred altar also have committed sins? For this reason God provided for the priests also to suffer from some passions, so that they understand human weakness and forgive others.

"But since I didn't do something I heard in church," someone will tell me, "how can I come again?" Come to hear again the divine Word, and try this time to implement it. If you put medicine over your wound and it doesn't heal the same day, won't you put it on again the next day? If the wood cutter who wants to cut a cherry tree doesn't manage to knock it down with the first strike, won't he hit it a second and fifth and tenth time? You also do the same thing.

But you will tell me that poverty and the need to work prevent you from attending church. However, this excuse is not reasonable. The week has seven days. God shared these seven days with us. And to us He gave six, whereas for Himself He left one. So for this one day only won't you agree to stop working?

And why do I say for a whole day? What the widow of the Gospel did in the case of charity, you do the same for the duration of one day. She gave two mites and received much grace from God. You lend two hours to God also, going to church, and you will bring to your home gains of innumerable days. If, however, you don't agree to do something like this, consider that with this

attitude of yours, you might lose the fruit of many years of toil. Because when He is scorned, God knows how to scatter the money you gather by working on Sunday.

Even if you found a whole treasure house full of gold and on account of it you were absent from church, your harm would be much greater — as much as spiritual things are greater than material things — because material things, even if they are many and flow abundantly, we don't take to the next life; they are not transported with us to Heaven, and they won't present themselves at that dreadful judgment seat of the Lord. Many times, even sometimes before we die, they abandon us. On the contrary, the spiritual treasure we obtain in church is not a possession that can be taken away, but rather it follows us everywhere.

Someone else says, "Yes, but I can pray at my house." You deceive yourself, O man. Of course it is possible for you to pray at your home also. It is impossible, however, for you to pray as you pray in church, where there is a multitude of fathers and where cries of petition are sent up to God in one voice. The Lord doesn't hear you so much when you ask Him on your own as when you beseech Him united with your brothers. Church is more spiritually conducive than home. In church there is one mind, the agreement of the believers, the association of love, the prayers of the priests. For this reason, furthermore, the priests preside over the services — so that the weaker prayers of the people are strengthened with their stronger prayers, and thus all together they ascend to Heaven.

When we pray each one separately, we are weak. When we gather all together, however, then we become stronger and draw God's compassion to a greater degree. The apostle Peter once was bound in chains in prison. However, the gathered faithful prayed fervently, and immediately he was freed. Consequently, what could be stronger than common prayer, which benefited even those pillars of the Church?

"O strange and inconceivable thing! We did not really die, we were not really buried, we were not really crucified and raised again, but our imitation was but a figure, while our salvation is in reality. Christ was actually crucified, and actually buried, and truly rose again; and all these things have been vouchsafed to us, that we, by imitation communicating in His sufferings, might gain salvation in reality. O surpassing loving-kindness! Christ received the nails in His undefiled hands and feet, and endured anguish; while to me without suffering or toil, by the fellowship of His pain He vouchsafed salvation."

—St. Cyril of Jerusalem

Intentions: Personal Prayer in our Corporate Worship

by Father Otwell

We all strive to pray during our worship time together. Mostly this is the Sunday Mass, but sometimes this includes Morning or Evening Prayer. In either event, we are worshipping together with the words found in the Book of Common Prayer.

One of the ways to pray these communal prayers is through the use of *intentions*. By keeping a particular person or subject in mind as I pray the Offices or the Mass, I *intend* or lift up these people or desires before God. For instance, I pray for my two goddaughters, Anne Grace and Lark Simone, every Tuesday night at Evening Prayer.

Each of us who worships at church is an individual praying communal prayers together. At Mass, Christ Jesus offers Himself up to God the Father as a perfect Priest and Victim. This is why the Mass is the most wonderful and powerful prayer — because it is the prayer of the Son to the Father. We who are members of His holy Body join Him in His prayer of Himself to the Father.

So it is when we add our intentions to our prayers. So it is that Anne Grace and Lark Simone are remembered before God in our worship, and so it is that your intentions are remembered before God in our worship.

You are doing your highest duty when you worship God. Since you make the effort to show up and pray, make your prayer requests both easier and more powerful by adding them as your intentions to our common worship at Mass and the Offices. Do not let a single service go by without silently mentioning to God those whom you have told other people you will pray for, those concerns on your heart you need to bring before the Lord, and all other people and godly desires you have.

Prayer is the most powerful way to change the world. The Mass is the most powerful way to pray. Pray as powerfully as you can by intending your Mass for those whom the Lord has laid on your heart.

Electronic edition of the Winged Bull

If you would like to receive an electronic edition of this newsletter in your email, please email Fr. Otwell at j_otwell@bellsouth.net. Include whether you would prefer to get the electronic and the print editions or just the electronic edition.

Stations of the Cross

Come walk the Way of the Cross with your fellow Christians in this special Lenten devotion. You will travel around the church through fourteen stations, or specific occasions along Christ's way to be crucified. We sing a little, listen some, and pray much. Everyone is welcome, and special booklets will be available.

This age-old common devotion begins again on every Friday in Lent this year. The time has changed to 6:30 pm in order to make it easier for working folks to attend. A simple said Evensong

will precede Stations at 6 pm. Friday afternoons are a very good time to make an appointment for Confession.

St. Blase Blessing of Throats

St. Blase Day will fall on Tuesday this year, so we will have our annual blessing of throats on the following Sunday, Sexagesima, February 8th. Christians have been spiritually blessed with this rite for many centuries. If you suffer with any ailments of the throat, make a point to come forward after the closing hymn and present yourself as you do at the altar rail for Holy Communion.

The word is that asking for the intercession of St. Blase is especially handy when you are choking with fish bones, which is nice to know during Lenten fasting.

The Season of Pre-Lent

The season of Pre-Lent begins next Sunday. These Sundays are affectionately known as the "Gesimas". Next Sunday is Septuagesima, which means "seventy" in Latin. It is about 70 days before Easter. Then comes Sexagesima, about 60 days, and finally Quinquagesima for 50 days before Easter. The liturgical color goes to purple for pre-Lent. We stop using alleluia during worship, and we stop singing the *Gloria in excelsis* on Sundays. We are still allowed to use altar flowers, but it is no longer as spectacularly appropriate as it is at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsunday.

Coming in March:

The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary – This Holy Day of Obligation which celebrates the virginal conception of our Lord Christ is called Lady Day, or the Feast of the Annunciation. It occurs every March 25th, exactly nine months before Christmas. It is probable that the date for Christmas was based on the date of this ancient

feast and not on some Roman pagan festival. We will celebrate this day with two Masses to accommodate our various different schedules.

Holy Week – The week leading up to Easter is the holiest week of the year. The liturgical drama of Christ’s entry into Jerusalem, His betrayal, the Last Supper, and Crucifixion leads right up to His Resurrection. Holy Week includes Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday.

Palm Sunday – The Sunday before Easter, we remember Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem with the blessing and distribution of palms.

Office Hours

Fr. Otwell keeps office hours at the parish. Barring emergencies and vacation, he will be available on site on Tuesdays from 4 pm until 6 pm and on Wednesdays from 10 am until noon. You can guarantee time with him if you make an appointment with him. Call him at 706.513.7294 and email him at j_otwell@bellsouth.net.

Septuagesima

We are, says the collect, not we shall be, punished for our offences: the world by boredom and fear of war, the Church by impotence and self-reproach, and we by separation from the life of God. Punished, says the collect, and justly punished; for if we are separated from God, is it not that we have cut ourselves off, by laziness in praying, and faithlessness in obeying? But, says the collect, we may yet pray with confidence to be relieved of punishment by God's mercy through Jesus Christ. Our punishment lasts no longer than our will to live without God. We throw ourselves into Christ’s sacrifice, we are offered, presented by him to God along with his own flesh and blood; for we are his flesh and blood, he does not disown us.

- From The Crown of The Year, Weekly Paragraphs for the Holy Sacrament, by Austin Farrer

Weekly Schedule

Sunday, 9:30 am Sunday school

Sunday, 10:30 am Sunday Mass

Tuesday, 6:30 pm Evensong

Tuesday, 7 pm simple supper & Bible study

Wednesday, 12 pm Low Mass

Prayer list: Betty Jo, Josephine, Teri, Elisha, Joseph, Steve, Lilo, Cindy, Marty, Elaine, Lee, Ruth, Sylvia, Nadine, Laurence, Kurt, Michelle, Bill, Christopher, Joe, Scott, Brenda, Kevin, Pat, Theodore, Aileen, William, Tom, Mark, Linda, Father Frank, Chris, George, Michelle, Beverly, Father Daniel, and Shannon.

Please pray for the repose of: David, Donna, James, Nancy, and Hugh.

Contact Information

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