

§ *Easter's Dawn; Our Promised New Beginning! >*

Over the past days of the Sacred Triduum, we quietly encountered another rite of spring that most notably the local weather person on radio or television might have mentioned in passing. The vernal equinox this year was Thursday, March 20th (Holy Thursday). This marks the formal beginning of spring according to our calendar, but in celestial terms it means that it is one of two days annually in which there are equal time amounts of light and darkness within the twenty-four hour day. For the spring or vernal equinox specifically, it will mean that beginning that day (March 20th) light will ultimately last longer than darkness increasing with each new day until we have the longest day of the year denoting the beginning of summer. Light and darkness. Old and new. Young and old. Yesterday and today. Beginning and end. Death and Life. The entire season of Lent that we have now passed through is, for the Christian, an annual period to stop and reflect about what in our own lives, personally and communally, needs to be changed. This is done by contrasting where we are with where we wish to be, or for the Christian, what needs attention in our lives in order to conform our lives more closely to that of Christ's. If there is more cursing by our tongues or unwarranted gossip, for example, then we desire to change into a people more like Christ by changing our focus to praising and affirmation. If our day, with its allotted hours is spent predominantly on ourselves or our businesses, then we might desire to change our focus to more hours devoted to God and families.

Forty days ago we gathered on Ash Wednesday to begin a process of conversion and renewal that would, by God's grace, change us into something new. This new person would be more like Christ in word, thought, and action. Our sinful ways and bad habits have ideally been transformed and forgiven. Ultimately then, we come to Easter to celebrate that Christ has transformed us...at least potentially if we accept...into a new creation and made us His sons and daughters by His passion, death, and resurrection from the dead. We enter into that mystery of faith in baptism. Winter yields to spring. Darkness yields to light. And in Christ, death yields to eternal life. We can share and partake in this life-altering gift if we enter with Christ into His death so as to rise with Him to life. It sounds so easy but we will spend our entire lives trying to "live" this mystery in a worthy fashion!

So I invite us all on this Easter Sunday to look around at one another in church or at the grocery store picking up that last minute item for brunch or dinner later today and ask ourselves two simple questions: *a)* do we notice a change in the lives of the people around us, family and stranger alike? and *b)* do we notice any change in ourselves compared to forty days ago? I suspect the answer might well be a combination "yes" and "no". This means some have embraced the Lenten penance as a true time of conversion, hence the noticeable difference! Many others though have made only half-hearted attempts, and still others made no attempt to change at all! Hence we see the same old unchanged people at church and in every place of our lives. It is still not too late to make the change! This is Easter's final footnote. We still have time to become more like Christ...but this offer is for a limited time only...so don't delay as they say in the plethora of late night infomercials....pick up that prayer now and use it to dial God for help. The gates of heaven have been opened by Christ our Risen Lord to accept the souls of the just and to raise their bodies up from their graves as He was. Get up out of that church pew today and get to work on the change for we believe in the core expression of our faith: *Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

On behalf of Father Bob and myself, we wish you and your family a most blessed and wonderful Easter!



Stewardship Report:



Revenue

March 17th :	8,946.58
Faith Direct:	1,100.00
Total Offertory:	10,046.58
Last Year:	10,423.83
Poor Box:	387.00
Every Penny Counts Box:	67.20

Number of Adult Envelopes: 310
Number of Children's Envelopes: 12
Number of Faith Direct donors: 34
Number of Registered Households: 656

Did you receive your offertory envelopes for April, May & June? Did you change your address? Are there changes in your family members? If so, it is important to let the rectory know so that our parishioner records can be kept up to date and you can receive important parish news and mailings. Please contact Tara in the rectory at 301-459-4814 or email her at tguevara@stmatthias.org and give her your updated information. Thank you for helping us to maintain our records!

Please note: There will be **two collections on Easter Sunday**. The first collection will be for your regular weekly offering to the parish. The second collection will be for your Easter gift to the church. May we suggest that you consider making your Easter gift the same as your Christmas gift from this past December 25th? This level of sacrifice will truly help our parish at this time of year. Thank you as always for your continuing generosity and stewardship!

Lenten Coin Folders: Please return your Lenten coin offering folders this weekend. Proceeds will be donated to the Poor Box. If you use coins rather than bills or check, please place folders in the attached envelope or a ziplock plastic bag.

Seventh Grade Shoe Collection Drive: **This is the last week to donate your used but not abused athletic shoes** to the 7th Grade's Lenten service project. The overall goal was to collect 600 pairs of shoes and they are well over half way towards meeting that goal with over 300 pairs collected to date. Please help to make this project a success by donating a pair of shoes!

Rectory & School Closed on Easter Monday



Please note the Rectory office will be closed on March 24th in observance of Easter Monday. The office will re-open on Tuesday March 25th at 8am. Our school is currently on spring break and will Re-open on Monday March 31st.

St. Matthias School Raffle 2008

The Raffle Drawing for Monday, March 17th
Dr. Rudolf Jeffries of Mitchellville, MD **won \$350**
He was both the winner AND the seller!

Faith Formation:

Easter Break: There will be no classes held on Monday, March 17th and 24th, 2008. Classes will resume on Monday, March 31st at 6:30 p.m. Have a blessed Easter Season!

Confirmation Retreat: will be held here at St. Matthias on Saturday, April 19th from 9:00 am. to 3:00 p.m. This retreat is mandatory. Confirmation Ceremony will be held during the **5:00 p.m. Mass on Saturday, May 10, 2008.** The rehearsal will be held on Thursday, May 8 from 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

First Communion Retreat: will be held here at St. Matthias on Saturday, April 26th from 9:30 am – 12:30 pm. First Communion will be celebrated on **Saturday, May 10, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.**

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW MEMBERS! After several months of preparation there is reason to celebrate as the Elect are finally received into the Church. We congratulate the following for all their hard work and dedication. We pray for them as they take this bold step of faith

Completion of Sacraments of Initiation: *Festus Emohware Sowho & Alvin Mabogos Guingab*

Full Communion with the Catholic Church: *Walter Franklin Stewart*

Rosemary Sesay (has faithfully prepared for full reception into the Church which will hopefully take place in a short time after a few more requirements are fulfilled).

Other Items of Note:

Mulch Sale: St. Matthias Boy Scout Troop 411 is holding their annual mulch sale behind the Church Saturdays March 29th and April 5th. Delivery is available for pre-orders. 3 cubic foot bags of shredded hardwood or pine are \$4.50 per bag if picked by the buyer or, \$5.00 per bag delivered. Red and Black Cedar Mulch are available through pre-order only.

For information and/or to place a pre-order

e-mail: troop411mulchsale@comcast.net or call 410-257-7477.

Outdoor Votive Light Offerings: We will continue our outdoor votive lights at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart and at the Shrine of the Madonna and Child beginning Sunday, March 30th. These votive lights may burn in memory of a deceased loved one; to honor a special occasion; or for the special intentions of a loved one or friend. Votive candles are \$5.00 and burn for 6 to 7 days...they will burn from Sunday through Saturday each week for the intentions listed in the bulletin. Candles will be placed there by the church staff, no private candles may be utilized in the shrine votive stands. Think ahead and visit the rectory offices to make arrangements for a special votive light as a sign of a prayer that remains at the feet of Jesus and Mary. Requests are honored on a first come, first served basis. A limited number of lights are available at each shrine.

Food Pantry Donations: Thank you for your generous response to the call for food in last week's bulletin. Donations are always greatly appreciated at any time of the year and can be dropped off at the Rectory!

***Rejoice in the Lord! Rejoice in His love!
Easter...the miracle, the gift, the promise...
Of an awesome God.***

***With wishes that the promises of
The Resurrection will brighten your life with hope
And bless your days with peace!***

***Have a wonderful Easter,
The Dominican Sisters of the St. Matthias Convent***



**Mass Intentions for the
First Week of Easter**

Monday, March 24

Easter Monday– School & Rectory Offices CLOSED

8:30 am Alice Ballard

Tuesday, March 25

8:30 am Virginia Craig

Wednesday, March 26

8:30 am Vincent Compas

Thursday, March 27

8:30 am Betty Barry

Friday, March 28

8:30 am Virginia Craig

Saturday, March 29–Vigil: Second Sunday of Easter

3:30 pm to 4:30pm—Confessions

Fr. Bob

5:00 pm Mary Troup

Fr. Bob

Sunday, March 30: Second Sunday of Easter

8:00 am Lovia Woronowicz

Fr. Jeff

9:30 am Salvatore & Johnny Provenzano

Fr. Bob

11:30am George Johnson

Fr. Jeff

Please Pray for: †The Sick and Homebound In Our Parish:

Fr. Augustine Kizito Abizi; Pearl Aitcheson; Fidel dela Cuesta; Mary Ennis; Ferris (Bo) George; Joseph Harrison; Robert Hoke; Charles Jones; Katie Kennedy; Robyn Kirby; Nancy Maimone; Carol McDonagh; Bill Moore; Larry Murphy; Thomas Opalsik; Ryan Zawada

†For Our Military Serving in Afghanistan or Iraq:

Spc. Michael J. Chiddo; Brian A. Densmore; Ryan A. Morgan

†For Our Deceased: Eileen Leahy; Rev. Harry Jacobs; Catherine

Schmidt † Names will be placed on our prayer list for three weeks. To add a name or to request continuing prayers, call Tara Guevara at 301-459-4814 or email tguevara@stmatthias.org.

Papal Mass News Items:

Ticket Raffle: Please remember that all forms for our Papal Mass ticket raffle are **due in the rectory office by MARCH 30th**. There will be no exception to this deadline. Forms are available in the back of the church. Only registered parishioners with a substantiated history of sharing of time, talent and treasure are eligible for the drawing. As more information is released about the Mass, we will pass it on to our parishioners.

Hunger to Hope Archdiocesan Food Drive: As a visible sign of our love of Christ and fellow man, and our joy that Pope Benedict will be in our presence this April, an archdiocesan-wide food drive, **HUNGER TO HOPE**, will be held April 12-13 to fill the food banks in the Washington Metropolitan area. More information will be made available in the coming weeks.

The Catholic Standard Writer's Award: This contest, sponsored by the Catholic Standard, is open to all high school seniors attending a Catholic parish or enrolled in a catholic high school. The award is a \$2,000 college scholarship and publication of the winning entry in the Catholic Standard. The contest runs from March 24th through May 1st. The topic this year is: **"The theme of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to Washington in "Christ Our Hope". What does this phrase mean to you as a young Catholic in 2008?"** For more information, please contact Tara in the Rectory office.