

Adult Faith Formation

Committee Members:

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To deepen our understanding of our Faith and increase our Love for God

April 2010

April Focus

New Life in Christ is ours through His death and resurrection, Alleluia! Alleluia! And new life is all around as we watch the changing landscape of spring, and listen to the sweet songs of the returning birds. We wish everyone a Blessed Easter Season.

One way to enter more deeply into the mystery of God's unending mercy is to participate in Divine Mercy Sunday. See details to the right.

We also want to mention a little bit about one of our priests of the month, Fr. Rhode. His time at St. Albert's was short but he was the one who built the grotto to Our Lady of Lourdes and is the only priest that is buried in St. Albert's cemetery. May God grant him and all deceased parish priests of St. Albert's eternal peace.

*"Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, On this most holy day of days,
To God your hearts and voices raise, In Laud and jubilee and praise. Alleluia."*

verse text—Ye Sons and Daughters, Verse 4

Upcoming Events

> **April 11th—Divine Mercy Sunday**—The Adoration Committee invites all to participate in the day's events, which include confession and praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet, beginning at 2 p.m. in church. Fr. Michael Becker will be the confessor. Watch the Bulletin for more info.

> **April 25th—First Communion Sunday**—12 p.m. Mass celebration for 27 First Communicants. Keep them in your prayers

Dictionary for the Laity

With the extra rituals of Holy Week behind us, we now begin the Season of Easter. But before we move on you may be asking . . .

Source—The Catholicism Answer Book - Trigilio & Brighenti

Why bother with all the symbolism and ritual?

Human beings are created with a physical, mortal body and a spiritual, immortal soul. Actual grace comes to us in many ways, one being sacramentals. One of the forms of sacramentals is ceremony or ritual. The way the sacraments are celebrated, and their cultural and ritual practices, are of great importance. Time, energy, and care should be executed when sacraments are being administered, since they are encounters with the Divine. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, etc., help believers transcend this earthly existence and contemplate heaven. Devotion and novenas to saints are also important to the Christian on the pilgrimage of faith to heaven.

Rituals and their symbolism are also important because we are tangible beings. We are body and soul composite. The soul needs the body to bring information to the intellect via the five senses. Your mind would not know what hot or cold meant unless you first experienced these sensations in your body. We worship the Almighty God not only with our minds, but also with our bodies. In fact, our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, these rituals convey our deepest sentiments to God through words, actions, and gestures. Catholics make the sign of the cross and bless themselves with holy water, they genuflect before the Real Presence of Jesus in the Tabernacle, they are inspired by a holy image, and they light candles to communicate their prayers. Symbols and rituals are an important part of Catholic worship, devotion, and spiritual life.

We praise God through the Five Senses.

- ◆ **Sight**—a beautiful church with stained glass windows, frescoes, paintings, and statues—tells a story of faith to the person.
- ◆ **Touch**—the sign of peace, kneeling, genuflection, the striking of the breast at the confiteor, and sprinkling of holy water convey the sacred actions of prayer.
- ◆ **Smell**—incense and candles transport the person to another world: the sphere of the divine. Incense has long been associated with our prayers rising to God; the fragrant smell is a pleasing symbol of our offering to God. **Taste**—through the reception of Holy Communion, we have a foretaste of the Heavenly Banquet that Christ has prepared for us.
- ◆ **Sound**—not only from the preaching of the Word and recitation of prayers, but also in the singing of liturgical music. Good St. Augustine, a fourth-century bishop and theologian, once said, "Singing is praying twice."
Jesus Christ is the Word that existed for all eternity and then took on flesh. His sacred humanity elevated ours. Hence, when we worship God through the senses of our human bodies, we give credence to the Incarnation.

Friendly Defenders

Baptism - Symbol or Sanctifier?

Question #2: Baptism is just symbolic. It doesn't save you.

Catholic Response: Sure it does. Just as the Great Flood washed away sin at the time of Noah, so baptism washes away sin and saves us. St. Peter wrote of the flood...

Bible Verse: "This prefigured baptism, which now saves you." 1 Peter 3:21

Description: God uses things in the natural world, like water, to bring about supernatural results.

Related Verses: Mark 16:16, Titus 3:5, Acts of the Apostles 22:16, Romans 6:3-4

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Parenting Tip of the Month

The season of spring and the liturgical season of Easter can have everyone excited about the new life that is emerging—from the green grass to the reception of a new sacrament by one of our family members. We experience this excitement through our senses, (see the Dictionary for the Laity). Why not ask your children to give you 5 ways—using the 5 senses—in which they know Easter and spring are here. The question might also have you reminiscing about years past. For examples: the smell of the Easter ham and the taste of fresh asparagus, the hug from Grandma, the planting with Grandpa, or the beauty of church decorations and the sound of music sung by a choir.

Happy Easter

Pope Benedict XVI April Prayer Intentions

Fundamentalism and Extremism
General: That every tendency to fundamentalism and extremism may be countered by constant respect, by tolerance, and by dialogue among all believers.

Persecuted Christians

Missionary: That Christians persecuted for the sake of the Gospel may persevere, sustained by the Holy Spirit, in faithfully witnessing to the love of God for the entire human race.

St. Catherine of Siena — April 29th



Catherine of Siena was a mystic whose insights are treasured by the Church. Her writings and teachings are in fact so valuable that Pope Paul VI declared her, along with St. Teresa of Avila, a Doctor of the Church in 1970. They were the first women to join this group of saints, which includes such prominent figures as Augustine and Thomas Aquinas.

Catherine was born in 1347 in Siena, Italy, the 24th of 25 children. Politically and culturally, her world was in transition. Prosperity was on the rise, and along with it, spiritual discontent and restlessness.

Much of the church has grown corrupt and attached to wealth. It had also become entangled in European politics.

A few months after Catherine's birth, the Black Death broke out in Sicily. By the time it had run its course, at least one-third of Europe's population (and more than 75 million people worldwide) had perished. Corruption, wars, and plague caused many Christians to feel that God had abandoned His Church. Instead, God was revealing his presence by sending saints like Catherine.

Catherine was only 6 years old when she had a mystical experience that gave her life a new direction. She saw Christ smile and bless her, but He did not speak. With that, she decided she wanted nothing more than to belong to Jesus. She found ways to be alone with Jesus in prayer, even in the busy family home. As she matured, she refused to prepare for marriage. Her mother did not understand this, but her father insisted that the family leave her in peace.

At age 16, she joined the lay branch of Dominicans and spent four years in prayer and penance at home. After this time she had a vision of Christ, who would not enter her room but instead invited her to come out and become active in the life of the city. Overcoming her natural shyness was not easy, but she responded to Christ's invitation and began to work with the sick and poor of Siena. In addition to this

ministry, Catherine began meeting with friends for evening conversations. Though quiet and uninterested when the discussion involved gossip, she was entirely different when talking about God. Her burning love and stunning insights captivated the young, who would listen to her well into the night. Miracles swirled around Catherine, and increasing numbers of people sought her out for prayer and advice. Soon she was preaching to large crowds.

As her reputation spread beyond Siena, this uneducated young woman became a mediator and peacemaker at the highest levels of the Church. In 1374, Pope Gregory XI asked Catherine to pray for him and for the Church. A series of political events in the preceding years had displaced the papacy to Avignon, France. This was a situation that, for a variety of reasons, became a scandal for the Church.

Through letters, both blunt and charming, she urged him to follow through on his promise to return the papacy to Rome, not an easy undertaking for him in the face of much opposition, even within the Church. But Catherine's way of life commanded Gregory's attention and respect, and in the end he indeed acted on her advice and moved the papacy back to Rome in 1377.

In 1378 Catherine wrote *Dialogue of Divine Providence*, probably her most important contribution. It was written for laypeople as well as religious. It is written in the form of a dialogue between God and herself, and explores what a person must know and do to seek holiness.

Shortly after finishing her book, Catherine was asked by the new pope, Urban VI, to assist him in Rome. This she did for the last full year of her life, working diligently for the unity of the Church, amid much internal conflict.

In 1380 she suffered what was thought to be a heart attack, which left her weak and barely able to walk. Even so, she made the mile-and-a-half trip to St. Peter's to spend the day in prayer with her beloved Jesus. She never recovered, and died on April 29 at the age of 33.

A Prayer for Priests

Heavenly Father, I ask you to bless our bishops and priests and to confirm them in their vocation of service. As they stand before us as ministers of your sacraments, may they be channels of the love and compassion of the Good Shepherd, who came not to be served but to serve. Give them the grace they need to respond generously to you, and the courage to proclaim your Word of Justice, Love and Truth. Bless in a special way your servant Father _____. Send your Spirit upon him so that he may always walk in the path of Faith, Hope, and Love, in the footsteps of Christ, the eternal priest, who offered himself on the cross for the life of the world. Amen

Apostolate of
Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration
www.eucharisticadoration.ie

- the following is another excerpt to reflect on as we acknowledge Pope Benedict XVI's "Year of the Priest" -

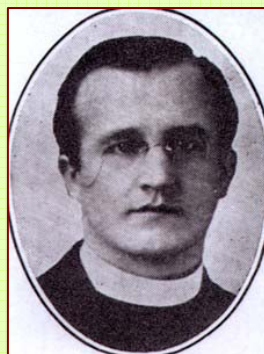
Reflections on the Priesthood

by St. John Vianney

"If I were to meet a priest and an angel, I should salute the priest before I saluted the angel. The latter is a friend of God; but the priest holds His place."

Source—The Little Catechism of the Cure of Ars

With Grateful Thanks!



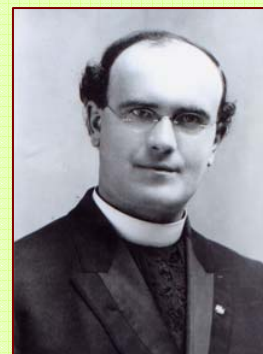
Fr. Felix Rhode, OMI

Born: 1885-Died: 1/31/1920

Ordained: 1911

Assisted at St. Albert's from
1917 to 1920

With Grateful Thanks!



Fr. Peter Bour, OMI

Born: 12/17/1880-Died 6/22/1950

Ordained: 1906

Served at St. Albert's from
1916 to 1926