

SAINT EDWARD THE CONFESSOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SERVICE WORSHIP AND KNOWLEDGE

Website—www.stedwardbowie.org

Newsletter—April 23, 2017

Father John Barry, Pastor

Maureen Curtis, Director of Religious Education

(301) 249-9599 during Religious Education hours

(301) 249-5473 Monday through Friday from 10:00am to 2:00pm

mcurtis@stedwardbowie.org

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Upcoming Dates to remember

- **Saturday, April 22** – Parish Spring Dinner at Knights of Columbus Boswell Hall at 6:30pm; tickets must be purchased in advance
- **Sunday, April 23** – Second Sunday of Easter; Saturday Vigil Mass at 5:30pm, Sunday Masses at 7:30am, 9:30am, and 11:30am; NO Pre-school or Children's Liturgy of the Word
- **Tuesday, April 25** - Religious Education Classes: Kindergarten through Level 5 from 4:15 to 5:30, Confirmation Levels 1 and 2; Confirmation Level 3 Confirmation Practice from 6:00 to 7:15
- **Wednesday, April 26** – Religious Education Classes: Kindergarten through Level 5 from 6:30pm to 7:45pm; Practice for First Holy Communion from 5:30pm to 6:30pm
- **Sunday, April 30** – Third Sunday of Easter; Saturday Vigil Mass at 5:30pm, Sunday Masses at 7:30am, 9:30am, and 11:30am; Pre-school and Children's Liturgy of the Word during 9:30am Mass; Confirmation Practice with Sponsors at 4:00pm
- **Monday, May 1** - Confirmation Mass at 7:00pm; Candidates to church by 6:00pm
- **Tuesday, May 2** - Religious Education Classes: Kindergarten through Level 5 from 4:15 to 5:30, Confirmation Levels 1, 2 and Confirmation Level 3 Wrap-up from 6:30 to 8:00pm; Practice for First Holy Communion from 5:30pm to 7:00pm
- **Wednesday, May 3** – Religious Education Classes: Kindergarten through Level 5 from 6:30pm to 7:45pm
- **Saturday, May 6** – First Communion Mass at 11:00am; Children to church by 10:30am
- **Sunday, May 7** – Fourth Sunday of Easter; Saturday Vigil Mass at 5:30pm, Sunday Masses at 7:30am, 9:30am, and 11:30am; Last day of Pre-school and Children's Liturgy of the Word during 9:30am Mass
- **Tuesday, May 9** – Last day of Tuesday Religious Education Classes: Kindergarten through Level 5 from 4:15 to 5:30; Family Picnics during sessions – details to follow
- **Wednesday, May 10** – Last day of Wednesday Religious Education Classes: Kindergarten through Level 5 from 6:30pm to 7:45pm; Family Picnics during session – details to follow

Saint Days April 23 – April 28

April 23 – Saint George

April 24 – Saint Fidelis of Sigmaringen

April 25 – Saint Mark

April 26 – Saint Pedro de San José Betancur

April 27 – Saint Louis Mary Grignon de Montfort

April 28 – Saint Peter Chanel

April 29 – Saint Catherine of Siena

Please go to www.franciscanmedia.org to learn about the saints. At this website you can sign up for an email delivery for the "Saint of the Day."

April 23, 2017 – Second Sunday of Easter or Divine Mercy Sunday

April 23 is the Second Sunday of Easter. During the Easter season the first reading comes from the Act of the Apostles and not the Old Testament; during this season, we hear about the beginning of the Church after Jesus' resurrection. The First Reading is from Acts 2:42-47 (*The first community of Christians grows as its members meet to pray and break bread*). The Responsorial Psalm is from Psalm 118:2-4,13-15,22-24 (*God's love is everlasting*). The Second Reading is from 1 Peter 1:3-9 (*We have new hope because of Jesus' Resurrection*). The Gospel is from John 20:19-31 (*Thomas believes because he sees Jesus*). You can find these all the readings for everyday of the year on the United States Bishop's Conference web site – www.usccb.org; there is a tab at the top of the page for "Readings". The following reflection on Gospels come from the website for our textbooks – www.FindingGod.org. I encourage you to look at this website.

Background on the Gospel Reading

The Gospels tell us that Jesus appeared to the disciples on several occasions after they discovered that his tomb was empty. Part of the mystery of Jesus' Resurrection is that he appeared to his disciples not as a spirit but in bodily form. The bodily form was not one that the disciples recognized though. In John's Gospel, Mary of Magdala does not recognize that the figure standing before her is Jesus until he speaks to her. In Luke's Gospel the disciples who meet Jesus on the road to Emmaus do not recognize him until he breaks bread with them. The resurrected Jesus had a physical presence, but the disciples couldn't recognize Jesus unless he allowed them to. His resurrected body, nonetheless, showed the marks of his crucifixion.

From readings such as today's Gospel, we also see that in his resurrected body, Jesus seems to be free of physical constraints. He appears to the disciples despite the fact that the doors were locked.

Jesus greets his disciples with the gift of peace and the gift of the Holy Spirit. In doing so, Jesus commissions his disciples to continue the work that he has begun: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." During the meeting, Jesus also shows the integral connection between forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The story of Thomas illustrates our Christian experience today: We are called to believe without seeing. In fact, all Christians after the first witnesses have been called to believe without seeing. Thomas's doubt is hardly surprising; the news of Jesus' appearance was incredible to the disciples who had seen him crucified and buried. Thomas's human nature compelled him to want hard evidence that the Jesus who appeared to the disciples after his death was indeed the same Jesus who had been crucified. Thomas is given the opportunity to act on that desire. He is our witness that Jesus is really risen.

Our faith is based on the witness of the Church that has preceded us, beginning with Thomas and the first disciples. Through Baptism we receive the same Holy Spirit that Jesus brought to the first disciples. We are among those who are "blessed" because we believe without having seen.

Family Connection

Many of us can relate to Thomas's response to the news that the disciples had seen Jesus. We want to see for ourselves too, but we grow in faith, trusting the experience and knowledge of others.

Many of us have heard the saying "Seeing is believing." As your family gathers, take some time to consider what that saying means. What are some things we believe because we see them? Is there anything we believe without seeing? Today's Gospel reminds us that faith sometimes asks us to believe things we cannot see with our eyes. Read today's Gospel, John 19:19-31, with your family. Think about Thomas's response to the reports about the risen Lord. Is Thomas's doubt reasonable? How does Jesus respond to Thomas? Jesus grants Thomas the evidence that Thomas needs to believe, but Jesus also affirms the faith of those who will be called upon to believe without first-hand experience. We are among those whom Jesus calls blessed. Discuss with your family the basis of each member's faith in Jesus—the witness of the first disciples, the Gospels, the continuing activity of the Holy Spirit, the community of the Church.

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Pray together that your faith in Jesus will be strong. Pray an act of faith together.

Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches, because you have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

Amen.

Gospel Activities

Please visit the Catholic Mom website – www.catholicmom.com for Gospel activities for April 23, Second Sunday of Easter.

Year of Grace

Pope Francis has declared this year, starting with Advent 2016, the Year of Grace; it will end on the Feast of Christ the King in November of 2017. The parish Liturgy Committee will be presenting opportunities throughout the year to reflect on how God's grace is present in our lives. The "grace quote" this week is: "But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me" 2 Corinthians 12:9

Liturgical Ministers Needed

As we think of the ways that God has blessed us with God's grace we should also be reflecting on ways that we can respond to this gift in service to others. Our parish is in need of more participation in the liturgical ministries of the parish (Altar Servers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC), Lectors, Music Ministry and Ushers). You can call the parish office (301 249-9199) or email it at stec@stedwardbowie.org if you want contact information for the leaders of any of these ministries so that you can discuss the details.

There are 2 Archdiocesan workshops planned for those interested in being a Lector or EMHC:

1. Lector: Saturday, May 6 at Mt. Calvary Church in Forestville from 9:00am to 12:00noon. Please RSVP to the Office of Worship at liturgy@adw.org or 301 853-4594. There is a \$5.00 registration fee but the parish will pay this if you let Father Barry know in advance that you will be attending.
2. EMHC: Saturday, May 13 at Sacred Heart Church in Bowie from 10:00am to 1:00pm. Please RSVP to the Office of Worship at liturgy@adw.org or 301 853-4594. There is a \$5.00 registration fee but the parish will pay this if you let Father Barry know in advance that you will be attending.

Saint of the Week

Each week I will highlight a saint whose feast is that week. Please share this with your child. This week Saint Mark is highlighted. This reflection comes from the Loyola press website: www.loyolapress.com.



Saint Mark

Feast Day April 25

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St. Mark was an evangelist, or Gospel writer. In fact, he was the pioneer in Gospel writing. His is the shortest and the oldest of the Gospels. Little is known of Mark except from the New Testament. He was not one of the twelve apostles, but was a member of the first Christian community. Mark had firsthand experience of the early Church and apostolic life. He was a traveling companion and assistant of Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey. Something happened to Mark on that journey, perhaps homesickness, so he returned to Jerusalem. The incident caused a quarrel between Paul and Barnabas. Barnabas, Mark's cousin, was sympathetic toward Mark, but Paul would not hear of Mark accompanying them again. Later Paul and Mark must have been reconciled, because when Paul wrote to Timothy during his final imprisonment, he asked for Mark's help.

Mark's Gospel was a great contribution to the Church. It included oral and written tradition concerning the words and deeds of Jesus. Mark probably secured some of his material from St. Peter. He shows Jesus as the suffering Son of God. Mark knew that to accept the Risen Jesus meant to come to terms with the cross. Jesus was glorified because he willingly allowed himself to suffer death for our salvation. Mark writes that anyone who wishes to follow Jesus must accept the cross.

Mark wrote to proclaim the Good News to a community of both Jewish and Gentile Christians. His Gospel is direct and simple to read. He speaks to Christians about Jesus, who understands their difficulties and sufferings and will one day bring them to share with him eternal joy and glory.

Traditionally Mark is thought to have been founder and bishop of the church of Alexandria, Egypt, where he was martyred.

Over the years artists have given a symbol to each of the evangelists. Mark's symbol is a winged lion because his Gospel begins with the story of John the Baptist who, like a roaring lion, called people to repent.

Reconciliation and Eucharist at St. Edward's

Preparation for Reconciliation and Eucharist is a two year program:

- Students who do not attend Catholic school start their preparation at Level 1 in our Religious Education program – this class is for children in first grade and children in second grade who have not completed Level 1. Level 2 classes are for children in second grade and third grade who have completed Level 1 and are still preparing to receive Reconciliation and Eucharist.
- Children in the third grade and higher who have not received their First Reconciliation or Eucharist register for the class at their grade level (for example 4th graders would register for Level 4) and also attend the Sacrament Class on Sunday mornings;
- The children of Saint Edward parishioners who attend a Catholic school receive these Sacraments at Saint Edward's but are prepared in the first and second grade at their school. You will receive a letter in September with details about the retreats and practices that all students, both Catholic school and religious education, participate in together.

Parents of children in Level 2 (Second grade in Catholic school):

First Holy Communion will be on Saturday, May 6 at 11:00am

Please note the following important dates for First Holy Communion:

1. Wednesday April 26, 2017 5:30 – 6:30 Practice for First Holy Communion
First Communion Mass seating requests due
2. Tuesday May 2, 2017 5:30 – 7:00 Practice for First Holy Communion
Teacher thank you notes due
May Crowning participation
3. Saturday May 6, 2017 11:00am First Holy Communion Mass
Children to church by 10:30

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Please contact Maureen Curtis with any questions: mcurtis@stedwardbowie.org or 301 249-5473 from 10:00am-3:00pm Monday through Friday.

Confirmation at St. Edward's

Preparation for Confirmation is a three-year program in the areas of knowledge, worship and service and includes students in Confirmation Levels 1 through 3 in our parish Religious Education program and the students of Saint Edward parishioners who are in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades at a Catholic school.

Students who do not attend Catholic school are required to attend classes in our parish Religious Education program during **all** three of these years:

- Confirmation Level 1 (6th grade in Catholic school) – this year the curriculum focuses on the Old Testament. Students participate in at least 3 Sandwich Sunday Service Projects
- Confirmation Level 2 (7th grade in Catholic school) – this year the curriculum focuses on the New Testament. Students participate in at least 3 Sandwich Sunday Service Projects
- Confirmation Level 3 (8th grade in Catholic school) – this year the curriculum focuses on the Sacrament of Confirmation and the meaning of it in a Catholic life. Each of the previous eight years of religious education are tied into the curriculum for this year. Students participate in the Sandwich Sunday Service Project each month from September through April.

The Archdiocese has notified us that Confirmation will be on Monday, May 1 at 7:00pm with Bishop Richard Higgins from the Military Archdiocese.

Confirmation Level 3 (8th grade in Catholic school) April/May schedule:

1. ALL REQUIREMENTS SHOULD BE COMPLETED
2. Tuesday April 25 – Confirmation practice for all students from 6:00pm to 7:15pm
3. Sunday April 30 – Confirmation practice for all students and their sponsors at 4:00pm
4. Monday May 1 – Confirmation at 7:00pm; students should be at church by 6:00pm
5. Tuesday May 2 – Confirmation Wrap-up class for all students from 6:30pm to 8:00pm
6. Tuesday May 14 – Family Picnic from 6:30pm to 8:00pm; all invited – details to follow

Sandwich Sunday Service Project

All of the students who are preparing for Confirmation (Confirmation Levels 1, 2 and 3 or 6th, 7th and 8th grades in Catholic school) participate in a group service project that is referred to as the **Sandwich Sunday Service Project**. The students gather after the 5:30pm Saturday Vigil Mass on the 2nd Sunday of each month to make sandwiches; they are delivered to Martha's Table after the 11:30 Mass on Sunday. Please note the following:

1. Students in Confirmation Level 3 (8th grade in Catholic school) participate the Sandwich Sunday Service Project each month from September through April
2. Students in Confirmation Levels 1 and 2 (6th and 7th grade in Catholic School) participate in at least 3 Sandwich Sunday Service Projects during each of these years
3. The next Sandwich Sunday Service Project is May 13

Parish Spring Dinner – Saturday April 22 at 6:30pm

Come enjoy a meal and share some time with your fellow parishioners (you can still buy tickets at the parish rectory office until 4:00pm on Friday, April 21). It is a family event; all are invited!! Tickets are \$5.00 per adult, children under 12 are free; there is a \$20.00 family maximum. The dinner is at the Knights of Columbus Boswell Hall on Route 3 in Bowie and begins at 6:30pm. There will a DJ and fun for all!