

Our Parish Visitor

Our Lady of the Visitation Parish Newsletter

Papal Visit

Pope Benedict XVI will arrive in Washington, D.C. on 15 April 2008 for his first Papal visit to the United States. The theme of the Pope's visit to the United States is *Christ our Hope*.

Following his visit to Washington, D.C., the Pope will travel to New York on 18 April and return to the Vatican on 20 April. While in the United States, Pope Benedict will celebrate his 81st birthday on 16 April and the 3rd anniversary of his election to the papacy on 19 April.

The Most Reverend Donald W. Wuerl, Archbishop of Washington, issued the following statement of welcome to the Pope, "It is with faith-filled joy and enormous enthusiasm that the Archdiocese of Washington welcomes the news that our beloved Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, will begin his first visit to the United States as Chief Shepherd of the Universal Church in our nation's capital. In the name of all of the clergy, religious and faithful of the Archdiocese, I express our warmest welcome while renewing our sentiments of love and loyalty to our Holy Father."

The Catholic Standard is running an eight-part series on the papacy and Pope Benedict in preparation for the Holy Father's visit. All youth of the Archdiocese are invited to enter a video contest to welcome the Pope. In addition, service projects are planned and all Catholics are invited to spiritually prepare by taking part in our Lenten initiative on Reconciliation, *The Light is On for You*.

Pope Benedict will celebrate mass on 17 April 2008 at 10:00 a.m. in the new Washington Nationals baseball stadium in Washington, D.C.

Please see the related article in this newsletter on how to obtain tickets. For further information, visit

www.adw.org.

Tickets to Papal Mass

Our parish of over 900 families received only 90 tickets to attend the papal mass. The number of tickets was based on our Sunday mass attendance. Archbishop Wuerl has requested that priority be given to parish leaders and to parish youth. Parishioners requesting tickets (2 per family) are asked to send an email to the parish office at parishoffice@olvp.org no later than Monday, 17 March. If necessary, a lottery will be used to allocate tickets.

HOLY WEEK SERVICES



Passion/Palm Sunday

15 March 2008

5:00 p.m. - Blessing of Palms

16 March 2008

9:00 a.m. - Family Liturgy

11:00 a.m. - Sacred Liturgy

Holy Thursday

Mass of the Lord's Supper

20 March 2008, 6:00 p.m.

Good Friday

Celebration - Lord's Passion

21 March 2008, 7:00 p.m.

Holy Saturday

The Easter Vigil

22 March 2008, 8:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday

23 March 2008

7:00 a.m. - Sunrise Service

9:00 a.m. - Family Liturgy

11:00 a.m. - Sacred Liturgy

Seasonal Quilts

Visitors and parishioners stop and look at them. Men, women and children walk up and touch them. Newlyweds and the recently baptized pose in front of them. There is something mystical about the four seasonal quilts that hang in our gathering space, one for each season of the year. The quilt for spring will hang in the gathering space through the month of May.

It takes time to make a quilt. Talent is needed to make a quilt a work of art. When given as a gift, a quilt becomes a treasure shared. A parishioner, Fran Rothenberg, handmade the seasonal quilts and donated them to our parish.

Most of us have quilts in our homes. I have several quilts at my house. The seasonal quilts that hang in our gathering space remind us that we are in a parish house: a house in which parishioners gather as one family, a house dedicated to the worship of God, a house named in honor of Mary.

When Pope John Paul II visited the United States in 1979, he celebrated a papal liturgy in an open field in Iowa. Parishioners from local churches made four giant quilts, one for each of the four seasons, to serve as a backdrop for the altar. The seasonal quilts that hang in our gathering space remind us always that we are stewards of God's creation.

On the Feast of Christ the King in Munich, Germany, Sacred Liturgy is celebrated at sunrise in a large

square named in honor of Mary. The Blessed Sacrament is then carried in a large and festive procession to the Cathedral. All along the way, families hang handmade quilts from their windows. The Holy Eucharist travels through a canyon of color and

Forty Hours Devotion

This year OLVP held its Forty Hours Devotion during Lent. Forty Hours began on Saturday, 8 March with a procession to the Thomas More Chapel after the 5:00 p.m. liturgy. The Blessed Sacrament remained on the altar during the next 40 hours while parishioners gathered for personal prayer. Parishioners committed to a specific hour(s) of prayer in advance to ensure the Blessed Sacrament was never left alone. The Forty Hours Devotion concluded at the 9:15 a.m. liturgy on Monday, 10 March.

The Forty Hours Devotion is a special forty-hour period of continuous prayer made before the Blessed Sacrament in solemn exposition. The focus of this devotion is on the Holy Eucharist. As Catholics, the words of our Lord burn in our hearts: "I, myself, am the living bread come down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, He shall live forever; the bread I will give is my flesh for the life of the world..." (*John 6:51*)

The number *forty* has always signified a sacred period of time: the rains during the time of Noah lasted 40 days and nights; the Jews wandered through the desert for 40 years; our Lord fasted and prayed for 40 days before beginning His public ministry. The Forty Hours Devotion remembers that traditional "forty-hour period" from our Lord's burial until the resurrection. In the Middle Ages, the Blessed Sacrament was transferred to the repository, "the Easter Sepulcher," for this period of time to signify our Lord's time in the tomb.

St. John Neumann (1811-1860), the fourth bishop of Philadelphia, was a strong promoter of the Forty Hours Devotion. He introduced the practice of Forty Hours Devotion at the first diocesan synod in April, 1853. The first devotions began at St. Philip Neri Parish, an appropriate place as St. Philip Neri initiated the Forty Hours Devotion in the city of Rome.

The Forty Hours Devotion was so successful, that it spread to other dioceses. At the Plenary Council of



Baltimore in 1866, the Forty Hours Devotion was approved for all dioceses.

The Forty Hours Devotion provides a wonderful opportunity for the spiritual growth of each person and the parish as a whole.

Archangel Windows

The Sacred Arts Committee of the Archdiocese has approved the designs for three stained glass windows for our bell tower. The windows will depict the three Archangels: St. Michael, patron of police and public safety, St. Gabriel, patron of mothers, and St. Raphael, patron of medicine and healers.

A special fundraising program is being initiated to raise money for the windows. Black and white sketches of the windows will be placed on display for parishioners to see. Later, color sketches will be available. Please watch the bulletin for details in the near future.

A window will be installed only when the funding goal for that window has been attained. It is hoped all the windows can be installed by 29 September 2008, the Feast of the Archangels.

RCIA

During the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday, Our Lady of the Visitation will welcome new members into the church. Listed below are the names of the individuals who have been preparing through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) and the sacraments they will receive. There will also be one infant baptism.

Baptism

Amber Harris
Denise Collier

waves of welcome. The seasonal quilts that hang in our gathering space proclaim to the Body of Christ: "Welcome!"

Justin Sprella

Full Communion

David Stach
Jayne McGrath
Jeffrey Novotny
Scott Crow
Scott Stiger

Completion of Initiation

Jacqueline Falk
Michelle Schmidt
Monica Schmidt

Infant Baptism

Felicity Cain

Deacon Bob

On 19 November 2007, Archbishop Donald Wuerl assigned Deacon Robert (Bob) Fischer, to Our Lady of the Visitation Parish. In his appointment letter, Archbishop Wuerl asked Deacon Bob to minister to God's people with commitment and dedication. Deacon Bob has been granted the following faculties (responsibilities) in the Archdiocese of Washington.

Deacon Bob can administer the Sacrament of Baptism solemnly to adults and infants. He can also celebrate the rites of the Catechumenate and receive baptized Christians into full communion with the Catholic Church. (Confirmation must be administered by a bishop or priest.) Deacon Bob may also supply ceremonies which may have been omitted when Baptism was conferred and preach according to the norms of the rite of Baptism.

Regarding the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, Deacon Bob can distribute Holy Communion at Mass and celebrate the rite of Holy Communion outside of Mass. He may also serve as a minister of Viaticum and Holy Communion to the Sick. (Anointing of the Sick is not a function of the Deacon.) Deacon Bob may also impart the Eucharistic Blessing at Eucharistic Worship outside of Mass.

Deacon Bob may officiate at marriages, provided that he is delegated for each marriage by the pastor of the parish or an officially assigned assistant pastor who possesses general delegation. (In Washington, D.C., the Deacon must be civilly registered.) Additionally,

MayFest Fundraiser

Looking forward to springtime and an opportunity to spruce up your yard? Look no further than this year's MayFest on 3 May 2008 from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. There will be a wide variety of plants to purchase to make your yard the envy of the neighborhood - advance orders will be taken. Watch the bulletin for more details.

In addition to hayrides, family games, a cake walk, craft vendors and good food, the festival will include a Silent Auction and Pick-Your-Prize Raffle. At the ever popular White Elephant Sale you'll find all the books, knick-knacks and gadgets you can't live without!

Donations to the White Elephant will be accepted on Thursday, 1 May from 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and on Friday, 2 May from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (Sorry no large, heavy items can be accepted - see bulletin for details.)

The MayFest is a major fundraiser. It is also a great opportunity to have fun and help our parish. Volunteers are always needed and welcome. For more information, contact Barbara Kaplan by phone or email at (301) 977-4459 or kaplanbb@yahoo.com.

Patronal Feast and Parish Picnic

Permission has been granted to celebrate our patronal feast at all Sunday masses on the weekend of 31 May/1 June. Our parish was canonically established by James Cardinal Hickey on the Feast of the Visitation, 31 May 1991. Our church was solemnly dedicated by Theodore Cardinal McCarrick on 31 May 2001.

Each year, an annual picnic is held on the first Sunday of June to celebrate our patronal feast. This year's picnic is on Sunday, 1 June at 3:00 p.m. at the parish pavillion. In case of rain, the picnic will be moved to Founders Hall.

Deacon Bob may preach according to the norms of the ritual of marriage.

During sacred liturgy, Deacon Bob may proclaim the Gospel at Mass, and conduct scripture services on appropriate occasions. He may also preach at Mass with permission of the All are welcome. Hot dogs, hamburgers and drinks will be provided by the parish. Families with names beginning with A-H are asked to bring a salad to share; I-P bring a side dish to share; and Q-Z bring a dessert to share. Please join us for food, for games and for fun.

New Stewardship Council Member

The Stewardship Council welcomes John Feeney as its newest member. John succeeds Gerry Foley as Chair of the Human Resource Committee responsible for Communications, Volunteers and Welcome. The Council would like to thank Gerry Foley for his two terms of dedicated, faithful and effective leadership.

OLVP Team Supports Rebuilding Together Volunteers Needed

On 12 April 2008, our parish will, for the fourth consecutive year, assist a Montgomery County homeowner in need of assistance on home repairs. The project will be completed under the auspices of the local chapter of Rebuilding Together, previously known as Christmas in April. Rebuilding Together has a mission of helping families who have limited resources make repairs or improvements to their home to make it safer and more liveable.

The project this year will be for a single mother with four children living in Germantown. It will involve painting, some exterior maintenance, and small plumbing and electrical projects. Home improvement skills are a plus



but not required. All adults and young adults (14 and over with adult supervision) are needed.

local pastor.

Lastly, Deacon Bob may celebrate a wake, funeral service or burial rite in accordance with the ritual; and may preach according to the norm of the rite of funerals.

Our efforts will start around 9:00 a.m. and end mid-afternoon. If you can help, please call or email:

Pat Sutton
301/977-0025
psutton17@msm.com

John Theis
301/977-9223
john.theis@ey.com

Stewardship Council

One year ago, the Stewardship Council reported on the challenge of meeting increased expenses within OLVP. There has been a slight increase in the weekly offertory for which we are grateful, and we thank those parishioners who have responded to our request. However, we need additional parishioners, especially new parishioners and those who have not been able to give before, to begin giving or to increase their level of giving both to the weekly offertory and monthly mortgage reduction fund. This is to ensure our parish services are maintained and our financial and mortgage obligations are met. We also thank parish volunteers, the parish staff and Fr. Ray for working hard to keep expenses to a minimum.

The help of all parishioners is needed to pay for our beautiful worship space and its upkeep, for educating our children in their faith and for our many other parish services. Our parish is only as strong as the parishioners who are involved and support its programs. During sacred liturgy, the offertory is collected each week, and the

mortgage reduction is collected the first Sunday of each month. If you are in need of parish envelopes, please contact the parish office at 301/948-5536 x108.

Through your contributions, you show support for both your parish and your faith. On behalf of the Stewardship Council, thank you for your support and your generosity. - *Michael Lerche, Chair, Stewardship Council*

Direct Deposit

Parishioners can now take advantage of direct deposit for their weekly offertory and for their monthly mortgage contribution. Use of direct deposit provides parishioners with a monthly record of their giving and is easy to initiate. This form of donation is now highly encouraged in order to maintain an even cash flow throughout the year, especially during the summer months. If you would like to initiate direct deposit for your contributions, please contact our parish bookkeeper at 301/948-5536 x102.

Prayer Shawl Update

Your response to the appeal for quilters, crocheters and knitters to help with the new prayer shawl ministry has been heart-warming.

Thanks to your response, we now have a number of prayer shawls on hand and have begun to deliver them to homebound parishioners to whom we take Holy Communion. We understand that the recipients are delighted to be remembered in this way.

New helpers in this ministry are always welcome. There are no meetings, no quotas and no deadlines. This work can be done at your convenience in your own home.

Prayer shawls can be any length. Lap robes for men should be approximately 30" x 36". Coverlets for those in wheel chairs need to be about 26" x 29". Feel free to use any colors or patterns; but please, NO FRINGE.

Donated prayer shawls can be dropped off at the parish office. Call Ruth Duvall with any questions: (301) 258-7566.

Parish Census

The parish census files contain the name, address, home telephone number, adult work number, and other information provided by parishioners on their parish registration forms.

Maintenance of these records is an on-going process. So that we may contact you when necessary, we would be grateful if you would call the parish office at (301) 948-5536 x 108 when there are changes to the information we already have on file. This includes new home telephone numbers or a new home address when you move or a new work number when you change jobs.

Also, should you choose to leave OLVP to join another parish locally or if you move out-of-town, we would also like to know this so that we can keep our mailing lists and files current and avoid sending you unnecessary mailings.

As always, thank you for your

cooperation. - *The OLVP office staff.*

IMPORTANT DATES

Confirmation
Sunday, 20 April 2008
2:00 p.m.

May Festival
Saturday, 3 May 2008
8:00 a.m to 2:00 p.m.

Ascension
Sunday, 4 May 2008

Pentecost
Sunday, 11 May 2008
9:00 a.m. - Family Liturgy

Parish Feast Day
Visitation of Mary

Saturday, 31 May 2008
5:00 p.m. - Liturgy

Sunday, 1 June 2008
9:00 a.m. - Liturgy
11:00 a.m.- Liturgy

Parish Picnic
Sunday, 1 June 2008
3:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Pavillion

Our Lady of the Visitation Parish
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Phone: (301) 948-5536
Fax: (301) 948-7452
Web Site: www.olvp.org
Email: parishoffice@olvp.org

Look for more information in our weekly Parish Bulletin located on the Parish web site
www.olvp.org

Operation Rice Bowl

Operation Rice Bowl is a project that

the Catholic Church is participating in throughout the season of Lent. People donate money into a box that looks like a rice bowl. At the end of Lent the Church collects the money and sends it to the Catholic Relief Services (CRS). CRS uses the money to help people in under developed countries. Some of the things they do to help is give them food, give them shelter, and give children an education.

My favorite part of the Operation Rice Bowl project is taking it home and trying to earn money. What you do is take the rice bowl home with an envelope and information on what the rice bowl project is about. Then you place the rice bowl somewhere where people can see and ask your family to donate. At the end when it is time to turn in all the money you made, you put it in the envelope and return it to your Faith Formation class or Church.

I enjoyed participating in Operation Rice Bowl. I realize that just by donating the slightest bit of money, I will help people just like me, but who need some extra help. I hope others chose to participate in Operation Rice Bowl.

(This article was contributed by Emily McGowan, 5th Grade Faith Formation Program at OLVP. She is an altar server and attends Thurgood Marshall Elementary School.)

Catholic Schools Week

During the weekend of 2-3 February, OLVP families with children in our inter-parish school, Mary of Nazareth, celebrated Catholic Schools Week by attending mass in their uniforms and serving the refreshments for our Welcome Weekend. Families also provided a generous donation to our parish.

This event was coordinated by Heidi Titus, who serves as our parish liaison with the school. If you would like to contact Heidi, she can be reached at: (301) 948-0432.

The parish offers its thanks to all of the Mary of Nazareth families for their thoughtful gift to our parish and for their assistance with our Welcome Weekend.