

The Lewis County Catholic Times

A Weekly Bulletin for Saint Patrick Catholic Church, Weston, West Virginia

Established 1848



So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" And Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it; as it is written, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on an ass's colt (Jn 12:13-15)!" Today we commemorate Christ's entry into Jerusalem for the completion of the Paschal Mystery. In the old calendar before Vatican II, the Church celebrated Passion Sunday two Sundays before Easter, and then Palm Sunday was the beginning of Holy Week. The Church has combined the two to reinforce the solemnity of Holy Week. The Palm Sunday procession is formed of Christians who, in the "fullness of faith," make their own the gesture of the Jews and endow it with its full significance. Following the Jews' example we proclaim Christ as a Victor... Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord. But by our faith we know, as they did not, all that His triumph stands for. He is the Messiah, the Son of David and the Son of God. He is the sign of contradiction, acclaimed by some and reviled by others. Sent into this world to wrest us from sin and the power of Satan, He underwent His Passion, the punishment for our sins, but issues forth triumphant from the tomb, the victor over death, making our peace with God and taking us with Him into the kingdom of His Father in heaven.

Commentary for the Readings in the Extraordinary Form: Palm Sunday

We carry palm branches as a tribute of waving joy, before Christ, victorious over death; also as a symbol of our wavering fickleness, betraying Christ unto His Death.

Jesus is our "example;" let us never lose sight of the eternal joy of "sharing in His Resurrection," when with Him we now "suffer on a cross" (Prayer).

In glorious language we read how the Son of God became the "slave" of man; how "He humbled Himself" and is now our pledge "in the glory of God the Father" (Epistle).

Even as Christ adhered to the Father, so must we, despite the seeming "prosperity of the sinner" (Gradual).

The "long Gospel" enables us, as it were, to be eyewitnesses of Christ's Passion and Death, revealing His love "unto the end" (indicated by Calvary in background).

Excerpted from My Sunday Missal, Confraternity of the Precious Blood

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Holy Week Schedule

Monday, March 26 No Mass

Chrism Mass, 4:00 p.m.
Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Charleston

Tuesday, March 27 No Mass

Spy Wednesday, March 28
Confessions & Eucharistic Adoration, 5:00-5:45 p.m.
Mass, 6:00 p.m.

Holy Thursday, March 29
Mass of the Lord's Supper, 6:00 p.m.

Eucharistic Adoration, from the end of Mass until Midnight

Good Friday, March 30
(Day of Fasting)
Liturgy of the Passion of the Lord, 6:00 p.m.

Holy Saturday, March 31
Easter Vigil, 8:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday, April 1
Mass, 9:30 a.m.
Mass (Latin), 12:30 p.m.

Palm Sunday

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JANE LEW BRANCH
(304) 884-7825
M-F 8:30-5:30

JOHN E. LAW, CPA, A. C.
132 First St, Weston
269-3304
John E. Law- CPA, Betty Hill,-CPA, Tom Stark

Real Estate Marketing
Sales & Appraisals
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304-269-5975

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St. Patrick Catholic School
Pre-School – 8th Grade
224 Center Ave.
Weston, WV 26452
www.stpatswv.org
304-269-5547
email: st.pats@stpatswv.org
Maureen Gildein, Principal
Regina Frazier, Secretary

Interested in Advertising in The Lewis County Catholic Times?
Call 304-269-3048

St. Patrick Catholic Church

210 Center Avenue
Weston, West Virginia 26452
www.spchurchweston.org
304-269-3048
304-269-1244 (fax)

Pastor:

Rev. James R. DeViese, Jr., J.C.L.
pastor@spchurchweston.net

Secretary:

Sandra Mick, Parish Secretary
secretary@spchurchweston.net

Weekend Masses:

Saturday, 6:00 p.m.,
Sunday, 9:30 a.m.,
12:30 p.m. (Latin)

Reconciliation:

Wednesday and Saturday, 5:00pm,
Sunday, 8:45 & 11:45 a.m.

Weekday Masses:

M, T, Th, F, 8:15 a.m. Wed., 6:00 p.m.

Eucharistic Adoration:

Wednesday, 5:00 to 5:45p.m.
Friday, 9:00 to 9:30a.m.

**(See Weekly Schedule for any
changes to times or location!)**

Religious Education

CCD and Sacramental Prep
Sunday, 8:30—9:15, school
Introduction to Catholicism/RCIA
Sunday, 8:30—9:15, parish office

Parish Office Hours:

- Sunday, 10:30 - 12:30
- Monday, 9 - 4
- Tuesday, 9 - 4
- Wednesday, 9 - 1
- Thursday, 1 - 8
- Friday, 9 - 1

Prayer Chain:

Micki Snyder, 304 269-3688
or 304 476-8819

Bulletin Deadline

Announcements for the Lewis County
Catholic Times must be submitted by
4pm on Tuesday. Email submissions to:
secretary@spchurchweston.net.

IrishFest 2018

Over 240 people (adults and children) attended the 2nd Annual
IrishFest on Saturday, March 17!



Left: Gaylord Carillo (2nd
from left), won the Irish
themed gift basket.

Also picture: Fr. DeViese,
Gaylord's parents and his
daughter Gail.



Above: Memphis Cuning-
ham and Ian Pickens en-
joyed the games, face
painting and balloon art
organized by the St. Patrick
School PTO.



Above: Entertainment was provide by Lewis
County Blue under the direction of Mark Lynch. If
you haven't had the privilege of listening to them,
come to IrishFest next year. They have already
been invited back. They're THAT good!



Left: Chris Cunningham and
his daughter Johna take a
break from the fun!.



Below: Joe and Judy Jerden and Pat Kiddy enjoy
the festivities.



St. Patrick Catholic School

**Do you want to
have more *faith* in
your child's
school?**

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Enrollment begins April 1
for the 2017-2018 school
year. Pre-K through 8th
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224 Center Avenue, Weston,
WV

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Parish Prayer List

Of your charity, please offer prayers for...

- ♦ **Those who are sick:** Pat Quinn (SJMH), Becky Markley, Garry Lynne Shearer, Steve Colburn, Nick Bakas, Brad Curtis, Rose Determan, Anita Droppleman, Seth Fishbaugh (Laura Determan's cousin), Nathan Fisher, Carl Ford (Lynne Shaver's step-dad), Bobby Gill, Ed Hubbs, Jeff Linger, Fr. Leo Lydon, Frank Lydon, Sam McLaughlin (Matt's brother), Donna Moore, Mary Ann Murray, Susan Murray, Burke Riley, Mike Riley, Tim Rinehart, Shane Rowan, Grace Turner (Fred Turner's mother), Sonny Walker, Kinley Weaver, George Whelan, Jane White
- ♦ **Those who have died:** May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.
- ♦ **Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life**
- ♦ **All Military Personnel:** Alan Hamilton, Aaron Hamilton, Bobby Summers

Thank You!

Emma Pascasio would like to express her sincere gratitude to all those well-wishers who sent cards to her and offered prayers during her recent illness. Please continue to pray for Emma, and for all our ailing/recovering parishioners.

Getting Formed

Go to: formed.org/register
Enter the access code: **WPVBMM**
Enter your email and create a password
Just three easy steps!

FORMED PICK OF THE WEEK

Stations of the Cross

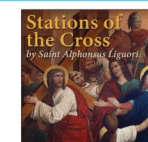
By Saint Alphonsus Liguori

Journey with Christ to Calvary

Personally follow Christ and His Sorrowful Mother on their journey to Calvary with the Stations of the Cross. Moving meditations by Saint Alphonsus Liguori accompanied by the beautiful Latin hymn, *Stabat Mater*, draw you into a more intimate experience of the Church's powerful Lenten prayer.

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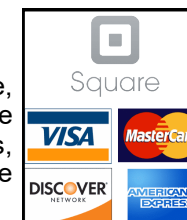
★★★★★

"Holding a crucifix while meditating on the Stations of the Cross... so moving. Thank you, Jesus, for the Cross."

—Marcia R, St Teresa's Church

Parish Store

Don't forget to check out our parish store, located in the Parish Office Building! There are many religious articles, books, rosaries, statues, etc. available. Catalogs are available for ordering.



OPEN

(When the parish office is open.)

Sunday: 10:30 - 12:30, Monday: 9 - 4, Tuesday: 9 - 4,
Wednesday: 9 - 1, Thursday: 1 - 8, Friday: 9 - 1

Now Accepting All Major Credit Cards

A 2.5 % charge will be added to all Credit Card purchases.

This Week's Liturgical Calendar

Saturday— March 24

Saturday of the 6th Week of Lent

5:00p Confessions

6:00p Mass for †Mike Rafferty by Sue and James

Rafferty

Sunday — March 25

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

8:45a Confessions

9:30a Mass for People of the Parish

11:45a Confessions

12:30p Mass for †Julia Ritley by Judith Woodruff

Palm Sunday of the Lord

Monday — March 26

Mon Monday of Holy Week

8:15a No Mass

Tuesday — March 27

Tuesday of Holy Week

8:15a No Mass

Wednesday — March 28

Wednesday of Holy Week

5:05p Confessions

6:00p Mass for Jennifer Riley and David Blake

Thursday — March 29

Mass of the Lord's Supper

6:00p Mass for †The Souls in Purgatory

Eucharistic Adoration immediately after Mass until Midnight.

Friday — March 30

Good Friday

6:00p The Passion of the Lord

Saturday— March 31

Holy Saturday

8:00p Mass for all Catechumens and Candidates

Sunday — April 1

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

9:30a Mass for People of the Parish

12:30p Mass for †James Paul by Robert D'Aurora

Easter Sunday

Liturgical Calendar for the Traditional Latin Mass During the Week

3/26 Monday of Holy Week

3/20 Tuesday of Holy Week

3/21 Wednesday of Holy Week

3/22 Holy Thursday

3/23 Good Friday

3/24 Holy Saturday

Scripture Readings

March 26 - April 1, 2018

Monday

Is 42:1-7/Ps 27:1-3, 13-14/
Jn 12:1-11

Tuesday

Is 49:1-6/Ps 71:1-4a, 5-6ab, 15, 17/Jn 13:21-33, 36-38

Wednesday

Is 50:4-9a/Ps 69:8-10,21bcd-22, 31, 33-334/Mt 26:14-25

Thursday

Ex 12:1-8, 11-14/Ps 116:12-13, 15-16c, 17-18/1 Cor 11:23-26/Jn 13:1-15

Friday

Is 52:13—53:12/Ps 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-17, 25/Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9/Jn 18:1—19:42

Saturday

Gn 1:1—2:2 or 1:1, 26-31a/Gn 22:1-18 or 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18/ Ex 14:15—15:1/(Ps) Ex 15:1-6, 17-18/Is 54:5-14/Is 55:1-11/Bar 3:9-15, 32—4:4/ Ez 36:16-17a, 18-28/ Rom 6:3-11/Mk 16:1-7

Sunday

Acts 10:34a, 37-43/Ps 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23/Col 3:1-4 or 1 Cor 5:6b-8/Jn 20:1-9 (42) or Mk 16:1-7

Need Help? Get Help!

Alcoholics Anonymous

AA - Tues., Thurs., & Sat.,
8pm school basement.

Narcotics Anonymous

NA - Mon., 7pm school basement

Use the door on the side of the school building facing the rectory for AA and NA meetings.

Weekly Attendance & Collection

Saturday:

186

Sunday:

158

Latin Mass:

30

General:

\$2816

Loan:

\$275

School:

\$580

Latin Mass:

\$600

Upcoming Special & Second Collections

• March 30: Holy Land

• March 31 & April 1: Education of Seminarians

• May 19 & 20: Peter’s Pence

UPCOMING EVENTS

March

See Holy Week Schedule on the front of the bulletin!

25 Sun: No CCD, RCIA or DTS

28 Wed: Last day to donate to the St. Joseph’s table food drive

April

1 Sun: No CCD, RCIA or DTS

3 Tue: 6pm, Knights of Columbus meeting, cafeteria

15 Sun: 6pm, Pursuit Family night, cafeteria

16 Mon: 6pm, Catholic Daughter meeting, parish meeting room

22 Sun: World Day of Vocations

28 & 29: Gifts from the Holy Land, vestibule

29 Sun: 6pm Confirmation class

May

6 Sun: 9:30, First Holy Communion Mass and May Crowning

8 Tue: 6pm, Knights of Columbus meeting, cafeteria

19 Sat: 6pm, Graduation recognition at Mass

20 Sun: 12:30, Confirmation Mass

21 6pm, Catholic Daughter meeting, parish meeting room

Parish Membership & Benefits:

To be considered an “active” member of the parish (and thus eligible for Sacraments, sponsor eligibility, and the “Catholic tuition” rate at St. Patrick’s School), the parish takes into account family & individual involvement in parish life and ministries, and Mass attendance. Mass attendance is only able to be tracked accurately via collection envelopes. If you are not receiving envelopes currently, please contact the parish office. Parishioners over 18 are encouraged to register as their own household to help us keep records accurate and up-to-date.

Holy Thursday, March 29, 2018
6 p.m.

Greeters:

Amanda and Samantha Blake

Servers:

Hunter and Joseph Blake, Brady Jordan, Jack Paugh, Jayna Jerden, Ian Droppleman, Tom and Joe Derico

Reader:

Judy Jerden

Offertory:

Mary Ellen and Debbie Rittenhouse

EMHC:

Mike and Anna Lee Determan, Micki Snyder, J. J. Jordan, Tom Ruppert

Cantor:

Donna Lake

Good Friday, March 30, 2018
6 p.m.

Servers:

Hunter and Joseph Blake, Hayden Barnette, Tom and Joe Derico

Reader:

Jeremy and Jenny Garton

Easter Vigil, Saturday, March 31, 2018
8 p.m.

Greeters:

John and Nancy Riley

Servers:

Hunter and Joseph Blake, Tom and Joe Derico, Kami Franklin, Brady Jordan, Ian Droppleman

Reader:

J. J. Jordan & Deanna Pascasio

Offertory:

Janice McCarty, Jacob McCarty

EMHC:

Larry and Luanne Bowers, Pam Thompson, Rose Neal, John Weber

Cantor:

Diane Collins

Easter Sunday, April 1, 2018
9:30 a.m.

Greeters:

Butch Cain, Judy Foster

Servers:

Lily Davis, Jack Paugh, Michael Riley, Ian Riffle, Dylan O’Sullivan, Tom and Joe Derico

Reader:

Mary Jane Parker

Offertory:

Armando and Hanah Almase and family

EMHC:

Marissa Aman, Paul Derico, Betty Hill, Steve Corley, Jeremy Garton

Cantor:

Brenda Riley

March Rosary Leaders:

Wednesday:

Tom Ruppert

Saturday:

Rudy Pascasio

Sunday:

Turner family

April Rosary Leaders:

Wednesday:

TBD

Saturday:

TBD

Sunday:

TBD

March Linens:

Kathy Boyle

April Lines:

Mary Wagoner

March and April Funeral Greeters:

George Garton and Judy Foster

Altar Servers for Holy Thursday and Easter Sunday need to arrive an hour and a half before the start of Mass. Servers for the Easter Vigil should arrive 2 hours before the start of Mass.


Parish Office Hours and Religious Education Schedule for Easter Holiday

The parish office will close at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 29 and remained closed until Tuesday, April 3 at 9 a.m.

We will not have Adult Religions Education, RCIA or CCD on March 25 and April 1!

Choir Practice

Choir practice is scheduled for Saturday, March 24, 2018, following the evening mass. It is not too late to participate in this parish ministry. Please join in.




Mass Intentions

Having the Holy Sacrifice of Mass offered is more effective than flowers or memorial gifts for your deceased loved ones or as a special intention for a living person or special occasion. Mass Intentions can be placed in a “Mass Intention” envelope and placed in the collection basket or dropped off to the parish office. Please indicate if the person is living or deceased and the date you would like the Mass to be said. Mass dates are filled on a “first come, first serve” basis.

Join Us

The Catholic Daughters meet on the 3rd Monday of the month in the parish meeting room at 6pm. Yearly dues are \$30.



Knights’ News

Annual Seminarian Support Raffle

\$1800 in cash prizes!

• 1st Place - \$1000

• 2 nd Place - \$500

• 3 Place (3 Winners) - \$100

\$5.00 donation per ticket.

Tickets available in the parish office or by contacting Brad Curtis at 304-904-4735. Drawings will take place at the Knights of Columbus Annual Convention.

The Vocation Chalice Program

Families may inquire about signing up for a week with Jim Gildein: Jim.Gildein@kofc.org

Saint Joseph’s Table & the 40 Cans for Lent Food Drive

The last day to donate food for the food drive is Wednesday, March 28!

Married? Getting Married?

The Marriage and Family Life Committee of the Pastoral Council invites you to learn more about the Creighton method of Natural Family Planning.

Natural Family Planning, or NFP, is an important aspect of married life that celebrates the gift of life and openness to life within marriage, while giving couples the option to de-lay conception within the parameters of Church teaching. *It is not “Catholic birth control” or the out-moded “rhythm method,”* but a comprehensive program for understanding how our bodies work, and how God calls us to bring forth life within the union of Holy Matrimony.

Join us for a free NFP seminar on Saturday, April 28 at 3:30 p.m. in the school cafeteria and meet Kathy Hirkala of the Upper Ohio Valley Fertility Care Center who will offer an introductory session to familiarize couples with the method and Church teaching.

Please call the parish office at 304-269-3048 to register.

Catholic PSA for Palm Sunday: Treat Blessed Palms with Reverence

By Jennifer Gregory Miller

Originally published in 2015, this PSA needs to be annually remembered.

Public Service Announcement: The palms we receive on Palm Sunday are blessed objects or sacramentals that need to be treated reverently, not as toys, mere craft material or trash.

Every Palm Sunday I just cringe because the palms are abused and such a distraction during Mass. The sound of palms being ripped apart is similar to fingernails on a chalkboard. There are all sorts of pieces of palms on the pews and floor. And as for the rest of the palms, they often become an object of play, or part of a distracting craft project during the Mass.

We are asked to hold up the palms during the sprinkling and procession. After Father prays the Collect, the blessed palms are no longer necessary during the rest of the Mass. The palms should be put in a place in the pew so they are not a distraction.

So this Palm Sunday, realize the blessed palm is a sacramental and not an object for sword play, not a weaving project to do during Mass, not something to pull apart and toss onto the floor, nor something that provides power or protection.

Palm Sunday Mass is not about obtaining the palm, but participating in the Mass commemorating Christ’s entrance solemn entrance into Jerusalem, and the beginning of Holy Week and His Passion. The blessed palm is a “witness to faith in Jesus Christ, the messianic king, and in his Paschal Victory,” a reminder of this commemoration.

To read the entire article, go to: <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/blog/>

Jennifer Gregory Miller is an experienced homemaker, mother, CGS catechist and authority on living the liturgical year. She is the primary developer of CatholicCulture.org’s liturgical year section.

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Dear Catholics: Unsolicited Advice from an Evangelical Convert

JANUARY 31, 2017
BY K. ALBERT LITTLE

I am a recovering Evangelical.
At the age of fifteen I had a coming-of-age epiphany, realized that the world extended beyond my doorstep, and became a Christian.
I “grew up” in the Evangelical stream of things because those are the sort of people I knew, they helped me get saved, and fifteen years later through a combination of serendipity, reading and reading and reading, and resisting the Holy Spirit for only as long as humanly possible I became a Roman Catholic.
It was a good choice, in the end.
But like so many converts more illustrious and important than me I quickly came to discover that once inside the fold things didn’t always look as rosy as they did from the outside. The good old Catholic Church, it turns out, has some rather dusty corners.
So with aplomb, arrogance, and unabashed honesty I’d like to offer some completely unsolicited advice, Holy Mother Church, from one of your newest sons.

Catholics, Figure Out What You Believe Already

Some blame a wave of poor catechesis in the “Spirit of Vatican II.”
Some blame a Latin liturgy which didn’t encourage parishioners to take an active role in their faith.
Some blame the Popes, the government, or a multi-national secret cover-up (although aren’t all cover-ups, by their nature, secret?).
And whether you blame a haunting, a dead language, or an international conglomerate you’re making an excuse and, ultimately, the time for excuses has long passed “Go.” Do not collect \$200 dollars.

Catholics, it’s time to get your stuff together.

Not only are poorly catechized Catholics bad for the whole of Catholicism they aren’t doing themselves any favours either.
I wasn’t raised an Evangelical, I found Jesus at the impressionable age of fifteen but even I, within months of meeting Christ, could talk circles around the average Catholic I bumped into on the street (as a good Canadian, I always apologized).
Fundamentally, Catholics are awful at explaining and defending their faith and whatever the excuse is it’s a poor one. St. Peter, the first Pope for goodness sake, was unequivocal when he wrote, “Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence” (1 Peter 3:15).
He wasn’t out for a lark, he meant it, and poor faith formation is giving all Catholics a bad name. If I would’ve known what Catholics really believed—if I’d met some Catholics that understood it—I would’ve been a convert a dozen years sooner. How many more are there, out there, awaiting even the worst best example of Catholicism?
We need to take steps to understand our faith and live out what we believe, or get out of the way.

Catholics, Take Off Your Coats and Stay Awhile

Here’s a heart-warming true tale.
I was praying that our local parish—where I’d been taking RCIA classes—would make a good impression on my long-suffering Protestant wife when she agreed to come along with me one Sunday.
As Mass ended and we were shuffling our way out of the pew she turned to me and said, with a measure too much glee in her voice, “I saw a miracle happen at Mass!”
“Love,” I said, with a measure too much condescension in mine, “that always happens.”
“No! Not the Consecration,” she said, too wise for my own good, “The miracle of the coats!”

She went on to explain, “After the Eucharistic Prayer everyone around me miraculously had their coats on so they could slip up for Communion and right out the door afterwards!”
I sighed, not only outdone in the humour department, but dismayed at the truth of the situation as well.

Catholics, we need to get better at being together.

In far too many of the Catholics parishes we visited in a seemingly fruitless quest to find a “good” parish community I’ve seen a disappointing lack of loving, welcoming, community-minded Catholics.
The drive-thru culture is pathetic.
As an Evangelical, I was fortunate to find myself in an incredible Christian community. We actually lingered on a Sunday morning in the church gym to chat about the morning’s sermon (hint: Catholics would call it a homily and it would be much more poorly done).
In our community we had small groups, monthly lunches after church, prayer networks, community outreach, and people looked like they actually liked each other if you were to stumble into one of our gatherings.
During what we called “welcome time,” and what the Catholic liturgy rightly calls the “Sign of Peace” we greeted each other with genuine affection—and I don’t mean merely kissing our spouses. We shook hands, and meant it.
“Are you new here? Cool! Let’s chat after the service.”
As a Catholic I love going to Mass, I love meeting my fellow sojourners but for goodness sake, am I the only one?
When I returned to the parish where I’d completed RCIA, some months after being confirmed at the Easter Vigil, the elderly priest took me aside after Mass and quietly said, “I’m so glad to see you back here. Almost no one comes back after finishing RCIA.”
That kind of attitude of surrender is exactly what’s wrong with our Catholicism.
After a genuine experience of the Eucharist Catholics should be chomping at the spiritual bit for more.
How do parishes meet that need? By shuttering their doors and offering nothing in the way of fellowship, catechesis, and opportunities to get together during the week?
I don’t think so.

Catholics, Sing Like You Mean It

A close cousin to the stony-hearted approach to the Mass in many of the Catholic communities I’ve visited is the completely disastrous approach to worship music.
Whether it’s Gregorian Chant, hymns from the folk revival in the 80’s, time-tested organ stuff from the 18th century, or contemporary worship tunes Catholics certainly have a confusing and complicated relationship with music. I’ve experienced a sum total of two parishes in my travels which seem to nail music right on the head and they were, interestingly enough, on either end of the genre spectrum.
(One was an Ordinariate Mass with Gregorian chant, the other was a contemporary and very tasteful praise band.)
The problem, I think, isn’t simply a lack of focus but a certain level of “singing it like you mean it,” that I’ve found sorely missing in the Catholic Church.
Russell E. Saltzman, himself a convert from Lutheranism, and a contributor to First Things magazine, writes with a clarity that I couldn’t muster if my life depended on it. On hymn singing in the Catholic Mass Saltzman says,
“The hymn singing I hear hardly amounts to a “joyful noise.” Sounds more like plaintive squeaks from depressed marmosets.”
Depressed marmosets. Saltzman is right, and this will bear no excuse.
Catholics, we’re joining our songs with the choruses in Heaven, singing in the unimaginable presence of God. Unless we’re handing out sets of earplugs to the celestial choirs we’re going to have to at least put in a little effort.
As my aforementioned far-too-clever wife says, there’s a distinct difference between doing something and doing something well. And

good grief, when it comes to worship, God deserves the latter.

Catholics, You’re in the Very Presence of God (Act Like It!)

OK, so you’re too bored to sing.
Too placated.
The liturgy drones on and on and the homily was slumber-inducing (many are but that’s a different problem!) and you’re checking your watch to see how much time is left in the Countdown to Denny’s as you fantasize about devouring an All-American Slam.
All told, poor faith formation, a lack of genuine community-building, and a disappointing commitment to belting out the baroque boils down, I think, to a complete lack of understanding about what’s really going on in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Catholics, we’re in the actual presence of God.

As an Evangelical who intentionally and wholeheartedly chose to leave behind an incredibly fulfilling faith tradition for the fullness of the Catholic Church this cuts me right to the core.
Do we get it?
As a freshly minted Catholic I can’t wait to get to Mass.
When I’m there, I can’t wait to do everything humanly possible short of dragging my corpus across the nave like a prostrate snail to show God my utmost reverence and love.
But, in my experience, we’re a few-and-far-between breed. Or am I wrong?
Too often I’ve seen my fellow Mass goers pass by the altar or tabernacle like they’re passing by the dining room table with nary even a bodily tremor, nevermind a bow or, for goodness sake, a genuine genuflection.
Too often I’ve heard lectors read from the Bible like they’re reciting a poorly-conceived grocery list, awkward after having mispronounced “jalapeno” for a second time.
Or cantors who offer up a responsory psalm as if they were a semi-finalist for world’s most boring poetry recitation. Congrats, you’ve just won first prize!
At its core, the Mass is an incredible time-bending, grace-giving, mind-blowing experience of God. So why don’t we act like it?
We should be the most excited, enthusiastic folks on the planet but instead we slink through the whole event, punching the clock as if it’s our last shift at Taco Bell before skipping off to college (and who cares if we put in any effort, what’s the boss going to do, fire us?!).
And I get it. We haul a toddler up the aisle with us and into a pew, and then out of a pew, and then into a pew again and we’re tired but we still do our best to bow, and pray, and act like we get how it’s all very sacred.
Why do we have to feel like we’re the only ones?

It Starts with Me, And You

In the end, there’s a rather mind-numbingly simple, and disappointing, solution.
It starts with me, and you.
I became a Catholic for a reason. There was an unbelievable appeal in the Church’s two thousand years of beautiful, seamless theology, liturgy, and worship that drew me in like a fat old horsefly to one of those zappy lights.
As Catholics we have access to the abundant fullness of the Church Christ founded and we should have no doubt of that. Never mind the winds of change that blow in every age the Church stands and, as Christ promises, will never falter.
We can feel safe, secure, and possess hope in abundance.
But we need to get ourselves in order, and no one’s going to do it for us.
Disappointingly, it’s down to us.
We’re the ones to begin the Bible studies (which help us learn our faith), we’re the ones who begin to hang about after Mass (to get to know each other and make newcomers feel welcome), we’re the ones to sing off-key like we mean it (because we’re singing with the angels after all), and we’re the ones to bow, deeply, to the Eucharistic Minister because in that moment we’re giving all honour and

reverence to God.
Catholics, I write to you as one of your own flock, and I say that with unbridled satisfaction and love. I write because what I see is disappointing, depressing, and down right crummy.
And it needn’t define Catholicism.
There’s nothing Catholic, after all, about poor faith formation, a lack of community-mindedness, lousy singing, and an absence of reverence and respect.
On the contrary.
We have to be the change. I have to be the change. And something certainly needs to change.
Thank God for His grace, in abundance, because we’re going to need all the help that we can get.

Prayers for Holy Week

Holy Thursday

Faithful God, Jesus gave us the gift of his own Body and Blood that we might have food to sustain us. As we share the Eucharist of Jesus Christ, let us become Eucharist for one another.
May our lives be blessed, broken and given that your people may live.
This we ask in the name of Jesus, our living Bread. Amen.

Good Friday

Christ Jesus, your love is made visible through the mystery of your death and resurrection.
Make us one in you.
Transform us into people of mercy who reach out to embrace you in the suffering ones in our midst.
We ask this, as a people reconciled to God through the blood of your cross. Amen.

Holy Saturday

Saving God, all creation waits with groaning and longing for the salvation promised to our ancestors and revealed in the Resurrection of your Son Jesus. Teach us how to wait for the bursting forth of your saving power when all will be reconciled to you in Christ Jesus. We wait in hope, O God. We wait in the company of all the angels and saints of heaven. Through their intercession may we have the power to say:
Holy, Holy, Holy is our God. Amen.

Easter Sunday

Jesus, we stand in awe at the mystery of your death and resurrection. We wonder at the depths of your love for us. May all peoples of the earth receive the good news of your gospel. As your people we ask this day for the power to live in the joy of your rising. May we sing with all creation: Hail, O Light of Christ! Welcome, Risen Lord. Amen.