

Divine Mercy Sunday



News You Can Use...from Fr. Steve

The Paschal Candle & Stand

The Paschal Candle and its stand together are a masterpiece on several levels. The Easter Vigil service begins with the church in total darkness to symbolize Jesus' tomb still in darkness on that first Easter Morning. The new fire is ignited and is a symbol of the Resurrection that begins to dispel the darkness. The Paschal Candle is then lit from the new fire and moves with the procession through the church, reminding the worshippers that the Risen presence of Jesus is now with His Church and accompanies us on our spiritual journey. Throughout the seven weeks of the Easter Season the Candle is lit for each Mass and remains prominently displayed in the Sanctuary until the final Easter celebration of Pentecost. The Candle is then placed in its traditional place in the Baptistry, where it is again lit for baptisms and for funerals. The candle is a reminder that in baptism, we are born into the new life of the risen Christ, and at our death, the candle stands at the foot of the casket, again a symbol that the new life we received at baptism now is brought to its glorious fulfillment in paradise. Thus, the Paschal is a powerful and poignant symbol for us throughout the Church's liturgical year.

However, at St. AJ, it is not only the Candle that offers us spiritual sustenance throughout the year, but also the Paschal candle stand, which like so many things in St. AJ church, is unique and beautiful but easy to overlook. As you remember, this candle was refurbished two years ago and, in its current pristine state, it is easier to observe and appreciate the artistry of the candle stand.

We know little about the history of this magnificent candle stand except that it was cast sometime in the 1800's and probably was original to St. James Church at its opening in 1887. It is made of brass and was cast by an older technique called sand casting, which is usually not known for producing such fine ornamentation and design as exists on this candle stand. Sand casting means that liquid brass is poured into a sand mold and left to cool and solidify. Afterward, the rough finished piece must go through some 15 steps of hand sanding and polishing to reach its completed stage which can then last for centuries.

The new silver and gold plating brings out the innate beauty of this historic and important liturgical piece. The artist-restorer of the candle stand told us it was an honor for him to work on this item since he doesn't often have the opportunity to ply his craft on such a fine specimen. The care and cleaning of the candle stand is rather simple but since the luster of the plating is vulnerable to touch [because dirt and acids can be transferred from hands and fingers], we would ask people to refrain from touching the candle stand if you examine it up close, as we invite you to do. Please pay attention to the many significant symbols and graphics. Towards the bottom, on the base area, there are even some Hebrew letters.

Catholic Charities Appeal Weekend – May 1 and 2

Each year the Catholic Charities Appeal raises much needed funds to support social service programs provided by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. This Appeal provides hope and gives help to almost 250,000 people each year - 100% of the funds raised in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia benefit the people in the five-county region. Please be generous!

This Week at St. AJ

Saturday, April 10

9:00AM Mass in Church *Holy Souls in Purgatory*
4:00PM Confessions
5:30PM Vigil Mass *Collegiate Confirmation/Bishop Jos. McFadden*

Divine Mercy Sunday, April 11

10:00AM Mass *Intentions of the Gatto and Seminole Families*
Catholic Forum Today in Parish Hall – After 10:00 AM Mass
11:30AM Mass *God's Blessing on Wing Yee Yuen*
5:00PM Mass *Intentions of Parishioners & Benefactors of St. AJ*
10:00PM Mass *Intentions of Students at Area Universities*

Wednesday, April 14

7:30AM Mass *Helen Mansfield*
12:05PM Mass *Lynne Falcone*
12:30PM to 2:00PM Church is open today. Please ring Rectory bell.

Friday, April 16

No 7:30AM Mass
12:05PM Mass *Gail Carney*

Saturday, April 17

9:00AM Mass *Holy Souls in Purgatory*
1:30PM Baptism in Church Charles Kocudak GLS
4:00PM Confessions
5:30PM Vigil Mass *Intentions of Parishioners & Benefactors*



Divine Mercy Sunday Celebration Today at the Cathedral Basilica

The Feast of Divine Mercy on the Sunday after Easter was granted to the Universal Church by Pope John Paul II on the occasion of the canonization of Sr. Faustina. Cardinal Rigali, the Archbishop of Philadelphia, will celebrate Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul today for Divine Mercy Sunday, the second Sunday of Easter. The faithful of the Archdiocese are invited to join Cardinal Rigali in this special celebration of the devotion recognizing God's mercy and love.

12:00 Noon Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
1:30 - 2:30 pm Sacrament of Penance
2:30 pm Recitation of the Chaplet and Benediction
3:00 pm Mass

Spiritual Growth – Lent through Easter

Presuming that we have taken seriously the grace of the Lenten Season - to turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel - our Lenten spiritual disciplines have hopefully established some formative growth patterns that have positively impacted our lives and our attitudes and behaviors. Maybe you have experienced changes in the manner or frequency that you pray, or perhaps you have established new habits of charity or compassion. Maybe you have attended daily Mass more often, been more aware of your loved ones and affirmed them or have had success dealing with negative or destructive behaviors or attitudes. If so, you have done these things with the "penitential" mindset of the Lenten season.

Of course, penance and discipline are part of every season and every day, but in the days of Easter Season, consider the spiritual value of trying to deepen and embrace these growth patterns, not from the standpoint of penance, but as manifestation of the New Life that Easter offers. The inspiration to continue along our path of spiritual enhancement comes now from the person and power of the Risen Christ.

Have Mass Celebrated for your Intentions

Easter is a good time to offer a Mass to remember a loved one, remember an anniversary or a birthday, or pray for a special intention. Please contact the rectory to schedule an Easter Mass.