

St. Francis of Assisi Old Catholic Church

Easter

May, 2019



We are a Christ-centered faith community formed to worship God where all are invited. We are welcoming, loving one another by embracing diversity, fostering spiritual growth and hope, living the gospel in the world, and recognizing the God who lives in all.

A different way to be Catholic.

Events

Things are happening in our community. Our church is alive and active. Come, participate and enjoy fellowship with your church community and your greater community.



We meet at 6:00 pm at the church and, following our scripture study, adjourn to a nearby restaurant to share a meal.

Won't you join us?



Spirituality Group

The entire Faith Community is invited to join this group for sharing our stories of struggle and joy in our faith journeys.

Meetings rotate among members' homes and conclude with a potluck dinner.

Interfaith Ministry Opportunities

Laundry love: January 15
4-6 or 6-8pm

Booms Laundry
250 Elm St.
Biddeford

Senior Lunch: January 22
10:45 – 12:00

St. David's Episcopal Church
Kennebunk

Outreach

Shelter Ministries

There is a continuing need for diapers for the York County Homeless Shelter. We have made a commitment to help fulfill this need and continue to do so.

There is also a dire need for Friskies poultry flavored canned cat food at the Safe Haven animal shelter which is another recipient of our outreach. **In April we delivered 86 cans of food, 6.3 lbs. of dry food, 14 lbs. of litter and 6 pkgs. Of treats.**



BLESSING BAGS

As part of our ongoing outreach to the greater community, we are handing out "blessing bags" (filled with several essentials for an individual on the street) to those who need them.

Please consider becoming a part of this ministry and carry a blessing bag in your car.



Donate Bottles and Cans

Thank you to all in the community who collect returnable bottles and cans for our CLYNK campaign. The money collected goes to the Wells Fuel Fund for those who need help during our cold winters.

So far this year we have collected

\$74.40

Calendar

Mass:

Every Sunday – 9:00 a.m.

952 Post Road (Route 1)
Colonial Square
Wells, ME



Wednesday, May 1

Liturgy Committee – 6pm

Saturday, May 4

Spirituality Group Pot Luck
@ Maryann's 6pm

Thursday, May 9

PC meeting – 6pm

Sunday, May 12

Mother's Day

Sunday, May 19

Parish Council Reports to
Community following Mass

Saturday, May 25

MEMORIAL DAY
WEEKEND

Yard Sale!!! 8am-1pm



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Ancient Faith • Welcoming and
Inclusive Church • Serving the
Modern World

Lectionary Reading for May

The Constantly Changing Christian Community

By ROGER KARBAN

Those educated in vintage Catholic schools, like myself, were often supplied with seemingly iron-clad proofs that our church was the “true” church. But if that is still the mentality of our church, we had best not read this month’s Scriptures. This month, some of these particular Christian sacred authors depict those who refuse to alter their beliefs as enemies of the true faith! Chester A. Riley (of the 1940s radio comedy series) classically nailed the situation: “What a revoltin’ development this is!”

Actually, the “development” revolved around how we saw Jesus of Nazareth. Though I believed Jesus had risen from the dead, the Jesus that I and the Catholics around me followed was the “historical Jesus”: a free Palestinian-Jewish man who lived between 6 B.C.E and 30 C.E. None of our sacred authors experienced that individual. The only Jesus they encountered was the “risen Jesus” — a unique person who came into existence on Easter Sunday — someone who (as Paul once reminded the Galatians) was neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female.

This is the Jesus whom Peter and the apostles preach as they stand before the Sanhedrin as we hear in the first reading on the Third Sunday of Easter. They not only “witness” that this itinerant preacher lives, but lives as the new creation the historical Jesus has morphed into — the “Lamb” which the author of Revelation has also encountered. It is to the risen Jesus that all creation is expected one day to say, “Amen!” — to his/her presence in their lives. Only then, can the community honestly join in the psalmist’s conviction that God has truly “rescued me.”

Considering the significance of the risen Jesus in the life of the biblical church, today’s Gospel pericope can’t be overestimated. Though it’s part of an added chapter attached to the end of the last Gospel, the pericope appears to narrate one of the community’s earliest encounters with the risen Jesus. Most Scripture scholars believe this is how Jesus’ first followers initially experienced him after his death and resurrection. The person they encounter isn’t just a resuscitated human being, that person is now a new creation.

For the time being, forget about angels at the tomb and the Emmaus and upper room apparitions. Those biblical events appear to be more theological than historical. In “real time,” only when Jesus’ disappointed and depressed disciples stop moping around, and, as the late Elizabeth Kübler Ross pointed out, eventually “go back to work,” do they discover Jesus’ new persona. The person they experience at that point in their everyday lives isn’t the same person they knew before Easter Sunday. Not only isn’t that person easily recognizable, but as Peter quickly learns, once the recognition happens, there is work to do.

The historical Jesus isn’t the only one who changes. Those who experience the risen Jesus also morph into new creations. They are no longer the same people they were before the Christ’s resurrection. An individual, for instance, who three

times denied even knowing Jesus of Nazareth, now preaches about their relationship before the Jewish Sanhedrin. Peter has truly been transformed into the flock’s feeder, imitating the Shepherd we meet in the Gospel of the Fourth Sunday of Easter.

One of the major questions the early church eventually was forced to face revolved around the makeup of that flock. How long would it comprise only Jews? Luke answers that in today’s first reading, when Paul “turns to the Gentiles.” In a drastic change, anyone can now become another Christ. He or she no longer needs to be Jewish in order to be Christian. The “great multitude” that the author of Revelation envisions now actually comprises individuals “from every nation, race, people and tongue.” It is no longer limited to just one people and religion.

On the Fifth Sunday of Easter, John provides us with the basic reason behind this transformation. At no point, does his Jesus provide us with a blueprint for the makeup of the Christian community, nor lay out the dogmas to which its members must adhere. They are expected to follow just one directive: “As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” They need no further explanation for changing their behavior. As loving people, they know there is no one action that always, to all people, shows love. Lovers either change, or the love disappears.

Luke tells us Paul’s community in Antioch agrees. They are the “church” that originally commissioned Paul and Barnabas to do something Jews rarely do: Evangelize. But the pair reached far beyond expectations; they eventually proclaimed the good news to more people than their fellow Jews. Yet this unexpected outreach wasn’t prompted by human motives. It was God, who, by means of the risen Jesus, “has opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.” A resuscitated Jesus could never have pulled this off. Remaining a free, male Jew, he would have been limited by his social status, race and gender. Only a new creation could have looked at this situation with new eyes.

In the Acts reading for the Sixth Sunday of Easter that my generation wasn’t alone in eschewing changes in the church. Luke tells us, “Some who had come down from Judea were instructing the brothers and sisters, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the Mosaic practice, you cannot be saved.’” In other words, “We’ve got to return to the day when followers of Jesus must become Jews before they can become Christians.” Scholars frequently refer to these biblical traditionalists as “Judaizers.” Paul deals with them in his letters, especially Galatians, and they seem to be a constant thorn in the side of first and second century Christians.

But if constant change is essential to faith, how do we know what the risen Jesus is telling us to change? Can it just be our selfish personality rising to the fore? Or is there a divine force actually communicating with us? Listening to today’s Gospel pericope, John clearly is convinced of the latter. He believes the Holy Spirit is at work in those situations. During the last meal that Jesus shares with his followers, he announces, “The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.” If there’s any doubt the early church believed the Advocate was going to shake

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things up on a regular basis, John's Jesus removes that doubt in 16:12. "I have much more to tell you," he promises, "but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth." Obviously, Gospel faith is an ongoing process.

Yet the author of Revelation is convinced that getting rid of our museum mentality is costly. The security, for instance, which the ancient Jerusalem Temple offered the people of God could only be replaced with the security of the "Lamb" at work in the life of our faith communities. We have no choice but to fall back on the risen Jesus' Spirit in our midst; to believe, as the psalmist put it, that the face of God is constantly shining upon us.

Both Luke in Acts and John in his Gospel believe the community always is to play an essential role in changes that affect the community.

The late Carrol Stuhlmueller stated that he was certain the Spirit was communicating with him when such an encounter actually cost him something. Certainly, the change from a Jewish church to a Gentile church deeply cost the Jewish church. As we heard, for instance, in the Revelations passage, their equalizing love of non-Jews demanded they give up prerogatives in which only they could boast.

With that in mind, any insistence on not-changing has less to do with being the true church than with our determination to avoid suffering. It is simply far easier and requires far less involvement with others to imitate a resuscitated Jesus than a risen Jesus.

In Celebration, May, 2019

Roger Vermalen Karban is a priest of Belleville, Illinois and pastor-emeritus of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Renault, Illinois. He holds a licenciate in theology from the Gregorian University in Rome and pursued Scripture studies at Saint Louis University. He currently teaches at Saint Louis University and Southwestern Illinois College.

Easter Vigil Rite of Initiation for Jessica Case

In the presence of her husband, mother, two children, and almost all of the faith community members, Jessica was baptized and confirmed as a member of the Body of Christ and joined us at the Eucharistic Feast. A reception with wine, cheese & crackers and cake followed Mass.



Bishop Rosemary, Jessica, Rev. Rosemary B., and Sarah R. (Godparent)

Spotlight!



Beach Cleanup

On a cold and blustery Saturday morning, several members of St. Francis Faith Community volunteered to help clean up the beaches of our beautiful town in anticipation of warmer weather. Pictured here are Carol O. and Pat E. after scouring the beach at the harbor.

In Memoriam



Brian A. Ross
7/7/57-9/21/17

NEW BAPTISMAL FONT

At the Easter Vigil this year, our new baptismal font was blessed, dedicated and used for its first baptism! The font is a gift of Laurie Ross in memory of her husband Brian Ross, a cherished member of our faith family, who died in 2017. The font was lovingly built by one of Brian and Laurie's best friends, Skip Carlson.



Meditation/Prayer

The purpose of daily meditation/prayer is the cultivation of a sense of the sacred. Sacred energy renews us. Prayer enables us to transform the world, because it transforms us! Let's commit ourselves to daily meditation/prayer...

Holy One, grant that I may always allow myself to be guided by you, always follow your plans, and perfectly accomplish your holy will.

Grant that in all things, great and small, today and all the days of my life, I may do whatever you require of me.

Help me respond to the slightest prompting of your grace, so that I may be your trustworthy instrument for your honor.

May your will be done in time and in eternity by me, in me, and through me.
AMEN.

St. Teresa of Ávila

Parish Council

President:	Sarah Rapone
Vice-Moderator:	Janet O'Day
Treasurer:	Dawn Saporito
Secretary:	Carol Olmstead
Members-at-large:	Janet O'Day Pat Emery Maryann Stacy

The Most Reverend Dr. Rosemary Ananis, Pastor

Web Address: stfranciswellsme.org

Physical Address: 952 Post Road (Route 1) Colonial Square Wells, ME

Mailing Address: PO Box 771 Wells, ME 04090

Phone: (207) 251-9751