

Old St. Joseph's Church

Est. 1733 | Philadelphia's Jesuit Parish

321 Willings Alley
Philadelphia PA 19106

215-923-1733

www.oldstjoseph.org

April 21, 2019 | Easter Sunday

Catching Up to Easter

A long time ago I found myself in a Jesuit novitiate, the first period of training for a Jesuit. Nine months in, and I was about to turn 18 years old. It was Easter time. The Jesuits lavishly celebrated Easter! But secretly, I was wondering: Why is Easter such a big deal? Can't we just say Jesus died and went to heaven, after a brief sojourn to accommodate some farewell appearances? Maybe he was even the first to go all the way to heaven. Anyway, that's where he ended up—however he got there. Of course, he had a lot of influence on his followers during his life time—which seemed to me what really counted. If Jesus, in fact, "rose from the dead," what more does it mean than he just went to heaven? Anyway, what difference does it mean for me?

Well, I kept those thoughts to myself. I knew they were irreverent and very much against the flow, given the surroundings of a Jesuit novitiate. But something also told me I was woefully uninformed. An even better reason to keep reticent. But still I wondered about it.

About a decade later—as I made my way through the seemingly interminable Jesuit course of studies—I was finally sent to study theology. We were assigned to study one of the hardest books I ever had to read (except perhaps for some math books I never mastered). I struggled with the text. Finally, it dawned on me what the author, a German theologian, was trying to say through all the technical terminology: Everything depends on the resurrection. Even the events that the gospels recount taking place before Jesus' death and

resurrection, have no meaning or significance apart from the subsequent event of the resurrection. The whole book was

merely an explication of what St. Paul put so succinctly when he said "*If Christ is not risen, vain is our faith.*" So that was my first hint at appreciating Easter. The resurrection validates everything we believe about Jesus and how Jesus connects us to God.



Step One—accomplished. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then nothing Jesus did has any significance or meaning and Christian faith falls apart.

But why is that? I asked myself. Why did the resurrection give such all-embracing meaning to the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth? To answer that question, I reminded myself that Jesus never claimed to be a "one man show." He always pointed away from himself, to the God whom he called Father. Obviously, then, the meaning of Jesus' life and death critically depends on how his Father embraced Jesus.

When Jesus cried out from the cross, his cry—like
—continued inside



Old St. Joseph's is equipped with an audio hearing loop. Switch on the T-coil function of your device to use the loop. Booklets with the Sunday readings are in the rear of the church.

This Week at Old St. Joseph's

Date		Mass Intention and Presider		Calendar Events
Mon 22	12:05 PM	<i>Michelina and Charles Marino (D)</i> Presider: Fr. Dougherty SJ	6:00 PM	No PREP
Tues 23	12:05 PM	<i>Jon Fox (D)</i> Presider: Fr. O'Donnell SJ	12 Noon 12 Noon	Faith, Food & Friends (Barbelin) Al-Anon Meeting (Drexel)
Wed 24	12:05 PM	<i>Old St. Joseph's Memorial Society</i> Presider: Fr. Dougherty SJ	6:30 PM	Centering Prayer (Drexel)
Thurs 25	12:05 PM	<i>Edward and Mary Britt Families (D)</i> Presider: Fr. O'Donnell SJ	12 Noon 7:00 PM	Faith, Food & Friends (Barbelin) <i>Schola Cantorum</i> rehearsal
Fri 26	12:05 PM	<i>Geraldine Marren and Family</i> Presider: Fr. Dougherty SJ		
Sat 27	12:05 PM	<i>Old St. Joseph's Memorial Society</i> Presider: Fr. O'Donnell SJ	10:00 AM 12 Noon	YAC Planning Meeting (Loyola) Faith, Food & Friends (Barbelin)
	5:30 PM	Presider: Fr. O'Donnell SJ		
Sun 28	7:30 AM	Presider: Fr. Dougherty SJ		
	9:30 AM	Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ	10:30 AM	Coffee Hour (Barbelin)
	11:30 AM	Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ	12:30 PM	Coffee Hour (Barbelin)
	6:30 PM	Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ	5:30 PM 5:30 PM 7:30 PM	Loyola Choir rehearsal YAC Pre-Mass Reflection (Greaton) YAC Post-Mass Reflection (Greaton)

In your prayers,
please remember our sick and homebound brothers and sisters
and our ministry at Pennsylvania Hospital.

Fran Banchi, Ann Crowther, Jane Crowther, Simeon Crowther, Lennie Felixson,
Susan Friend, Edith Ruth Jett, Catherine Keddie, Anna Krachman, D. Minter,
Donovan Schmidt and Mickey Zippo.

Bringing Communion to the Homebound

Those who are confined to home—even for a short time—can remain connected to our shared worship by receiving Communion at home. If you, a family member, friend or neighbor (with their approval of course), would like to receive Communion at home, contact the parish offices at 215-923-1733 to arrange for a parish Eucharistic Minister to visit.

Old St. Joseph's Prayer List

The parish prayer list is updated quarterly. As always, you may add names to the list by emailing office@oldstjoseph.org, by calling 215-923-1733 or by leaving a message in the parish offices. Thank you!

Front page image: Rembrandt von Rijn, Supper at Emmaus, c. 1629.

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every human cry—reverberated for a while, his originating from a hilltop overlooking Jerusalem and then dissipating in the distance. Did it collapse into silence like every anguished human cry must? Or did the Father hear the cry of Jesus and answer his dying Son? Could the Father allow his Son's last word in human history to be an anguished, desperate unanswered call? Was the promise Jesus made of ushering God's kingdom to be an ultimate falsehood? So the resurrection validates Jesus' words and actions precisely because it is the Father's response to the life and death of Jesus. I like this idea because it reveals how close Jesus is to his Father and how close God is to us when we join ourselves to Jesus.

So Step Two—accomplished. Raising Jesus from the dead is the Father's taking as his own everything that Jesus said and did as God's Son.

But, I asked myself, why did all of this have to revolve around death? Why couldn't the Father's voice from heaven at the Transfiguration have been the Father's definitive response to Jesus? Or why couldn't the Father simply have joined the celebration at the triumphant entry into Jerusalem? I guess what I was asking finally was the hardest question of all. Why the cross? I was on to something, linking the cross and the resurrection. Why did the crucifixion have to precede the resurrection?

Getting ordained a priest and serving in pastoral ministry helped me over the years to answer this question, though I certainly don't have this one totally answered. God's grace is still trying to get through the seemingly impenetrable wall that I, like all of us, construct against his grace. But let me report on a work in progress.

As you may know, for the three years before I came to Old St. Joe's, I served in a parish in Staten Island, NY. It was a big parish and we had about 225 funerals every year. Over the course of three years, in an average week I conducted a wake service,

funeral mass and burial service at a cemetery.

Death became a routine event in my world. At least once a week I stood before a grieving family. Sometimes the deceased was the matriarch of the family, the old Italian grandmother who had cooked the family pasta every Sunday for 75 years. Sometimes for a middle-aged person, it was a sudden, unexpected death. A few times, far too frequently, it was a young person in the bloom of youth who died of an overdose. I came to realize the obvious truth, that death is the definitive final force which will ultimately overwhelm each of us.

I was an observer of other people's grief. I regularly saw how death separates us from loved ones, frightens us in the face of the unknown, renders us helpless against forces over which we have no control, and so much more. What is the response of a loving God whose creatures—each of us—must endure what appears so senseless an end of life? But even more, for Jesus, his death was not simply another instance of the natural forces to which we all must succumb. Death for Jesus was the weapon used by his enemies to stamp out everything he lived and died for. So all the more it must be precisely the death of Jesus that summoned his Father's response. Since Jesus allied himself so closely to the Father's cause, didn't the Father have to validate that violence and even death itself could not triumph over his Son? The resurrection is the final triumph that only God's power could effect. Paul again got it right when he said that we die when we join ourselves to Christ, so that we can rise again with him to new life. Therefore, I'm no longer a bystander when Easter comes, contemplating what happened to Jesus alone. I, too, rise with Jesus from the moment of my baptism to the final culmination when he comes again.

Easter tells me what God, the Father of Jesus, is working to create in me. And somewhere in that mystery is the final answer to all my questions.

Happy Easter.

—Walter Modry, SJ
Pastor

Announcements

Villanova to Host Peter Steinfels

The Thomas More Society will host Peter Steinfels at the Villanova Law School, Room 101, on **Thursday, April 25 at 4:30 PM**. Steinfels will address *The Church and The Scandal: New Challenges, New Questions*. No RSVP is required; free will donations will be accepted.

Spiritual Pilgrimage to Portugal

The Maryland and USA Northeast provinces of the Society of Jesus will host an 11-day pilgrimage to Portugal, **October 21–31**. It will be directed by Fr. Rodolfo Casals SJ. For more information, contact coordinator James Skurka at jskurka@jesuits.org.

Supporting Philadelphia Catholic Schools

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia would like to remind you about Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit and Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit programs (EITC/OSTC). All Catholic schools in the Archdiocese are eligible to receive donations through these programs. In addition, there is legislation in the Pennsylvania House that would expand the availability of these tax credits. Additional information can be found at dced.pa.gov.

Volunteers Welcome!

Old Saint Joseph's Church always welcomes new altar servers, Eucharistic ministers, lectors and ushers! Scheduling is flexible and training will be provided. Sign up online through the Ministry Scheduling Program at www.oldstjoseph.org.

Catholic Charities Appeal at Work

Have you wondered how your gift to the Catholic Charities Appeal is used? This summer, the Catholic Charities Appeal will partner with the archdiocesan Nutritional Development Services (NDS) on an innovative fresh produce initiative. NDS will set up produce stands in underserved parts of Philadelphia to help families obtain the fresh fruits and vegetables they would otherwise not be able to access or afford. Only 25% of Philadelphia children eat at least one serving of fresh produce a day, and many children lose access to healthy breakfasts and lunches when school is out of session. Visit catholiccharitiesappeal.org for more information and to make your donation.

Announcements

YAC Semi-Annual Planning Meeting

The OSJ Young Adult Community (YAC) will meet on **Saturday, April 27 from 10:00 AM–4:00 PM** for its semi-annual planning meeting. In the months ahead, YAC is anticipating significant changes and will be actively seeking new individuals to help coordinate, lead and grow the community. YAC thrives on participation from members of the community, both as leaders and participants, to support its fundamental sense of community as well as its future goals. All members and ideas are welcome and your participation is appreciated. Please join us for as much of the day as your schedule permits, in the Loyola Room of the parish offices. Questions? Email Megan at mprilutski@gmail.com.

Post-Mass Reflection on April 28

Young adults are invited to join our community for an additional reflection **after the 6:30 PM Mass on Sunday, April 28.** (The pre-Mass reflection will still be offered). We will re-read the scriptures, have time for quiet prayer and an opportunity for sharing and discussion. Materials will be provided; we will end by **8:30 PM.** Questions? Please email Danielle at critellid@gmail.com.

Online Giving Opportunities

All of the following collections will remain active at our online giving website through May 10:

- *Operation Rice Bowl*
- *Easter Flowers*
- *Easter Music*
- *Holy Thursday collection*
- *Good Friday collection for the Holy Land*
- *Easter collection*

If you use envelopes, you received designated envelopes in your last mailing. Thank you, as always, for your generosity!

Centering Prayer

The centering prayer group will meet on **Wednesday, April 24** (the fourth Wednesday this month) from **6:30–8:30 PM** in the Drexel Parlor of the parish offices. The meeting will include discussion of centering prayer followed by evening prayer with a period of centering. Anyone interested in contemplative prayer is welcome to join us. For further information, contact Christine Szczepanowski at 267-250-3049 or prep@oldstjoseph.org.

Rice Bowl Updates

Thanks to all who wrote letters and sent emails during the March 24 coffee hours and April 7 Rice Bowl recipe dinner! On April 8 and 9, the letters were delivered to the local offices of Senator Robert Casey and Senator Patrick Toomey. Senator Casey's staff, in particular, was well acquainted with the work of Catholic Relief Services and impressed that so many people took the time to handwrite letters.

Old St. Joseph's will collect Rice Bowl donations on the weekend of **April 27–28.** If you have been setting aside cash, you can convert it to a check or online contribution so that it is recorded with your annual giving for tax purposes. Also, it's not too late to download the CRS app; if you designate OSJ as your parish, the local share of the collection goes to the Archdiocesan Nutritional Development Services!

OSJ Reading Group

The next meeting of the OSJ reading group is **Tuesday, May 7 from 7:30–9:00 PM** in the Loyola Room of the parish offices. The group will discuss *Why Religion? A Personal Story* by Elaine Pagels. All who enjoy reading are welcome! For more information, contact Carol Shloss at shlosscarol@gmail.com.

INFORMATION

Rectory Office Hours

Monday through Friday: 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Sunday: 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Mass Times

Monday through Saturday: 12:05 PM

Saturday Vigil Mass for Sunday: 5:30 PM

Sunday: 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 AM and 6:30 PM

Holy Days: 12:05 and 7:30 PM

Medical Emergency

In a medical emergency when the need for a priest is urgent, please call the rectory.

Hearing Enhancements

Old St. Joseph's is equipped with an audio hearing loop. Switch on the T-coil function of your device to use the loop. Booklets with the Sunday readings are available in the rear of the church.

Registration

Persons who want to register as parishioners should complete a parish registration form and return it to the rectory office by mail or in person. Registration forms are available in the rectory office during normal office hours, on the bookcases in the back of the church and online at www.oldstjoseph.org.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Monday through Saturday: 11:30 AM to noon or by appointment

Sacrament of Baptism

Persons wanting to arrange a baptism should call Fr. Dougherty at the parish office at least two months before the desired date to arrange catechesis and the baptism celebration.

The Sacrament of Anointing

The Sacrament of Anointing (the sacrament of the sick) is administered during the 12:05 PM Mass on the first Saturday of each month. Homebound or hospitalized persons wanting to receive the Sacrament of Anointing should call the parish office.

Sacrament of Matrimony

Persons wanting to be married in the parish should call Fr. O'Donnell at the parish office at least nine months before the desired date.

Rite of Christian Initiation

Unbaptized adults who are considering baptism into the Catholic Church, baptized Catholics who have received no other sacraments and who want to be confirmed and to receive First Eucharist, and baptized non-Catholics who are considering full communion in the Catholic Church should call Fr. O'Donnell at the parish office.

Mass of Christian Burial

The funeral director should call the parish office.

Pastor

Fr. Walter Modrys SJ (pastor@oldstjoseph.org)

Parochial Vicar

Fr. Edward O'Donnell SJ (eodonnell@oldstjoseph.org)

In Residence

Br. Robert Carson SJ

Fr. Edward Dougherty SJ (dougherty@oldstjoseph.org)

Pastoral Associate

BJ Brown (bjbrown@oldstjoseph.org)

Business Manager

Eric German (germane@oldstjoseph.org)

Director of Music

Mark Bani (music@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Offices

(office@oldstjoseph.org)

Religious Education (PREP) Coordinator

Christine Szczepanowski (prep@oldstjoseph.org)

Faith, Food & Friends Director

Deborah Hluchan (faithandfriends@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Pastoral Council

Rana McNamara and Richard Le, co-chairs

(osjpc@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Finance Council

Paul Shay, chair

Historic Preservation Corporation Board

Fr. Walter Modrys SJ, president

Adult Education

Rita O'Brien and Jeanmarie Zippo

(adulted@oldstjoseph.org)

Eldership

Pat Nelson (eldership@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Life

Joe Casey (parishlife@oldstjoseph.org)

Ignatian Spirituality and Formation

John Bitterman (osjspirituality@oldstjoseph.org)

Women, Faith and Fellowship

Rana McNamara (wff@oldstjoseph.org)

Young Adult Community

Jenn Lydic and Megan Prilutski (osjyac@gmail.com)

Altar Servers

Maria Ramirez (altarserver@oldstjoseph.org)

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Bill Stewart (EM@oldstjoseph.org)

Hospital Ministry

Luanne Balestrucci (hospitalEM@oldstjoseph.org)

Homebound Ministry

Neal Hébert (homeEM@oldstjoseph.org)

Lectors

Lou Anne Bulik (lectors@oldstjoseph.org)

Ushers

Nikola Sizgorich (ushers@oldstjoseph.org)

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Peggy Connolly (clow@oldstjoseph.org)