Looking for the Joy

Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light (Romans 13:12).

. . . But the light wouldn’t just be on the armor. It would shine out everywhere. It would be on us. There would be no hiding it!—response of a child at the Children’s Liturgy of the Word, December 1, 2019.

Looking for joy in our faith? You need only look toward the youngest among us. I’m often met with skepticism when I share these thoughts. But I say with all honesty that there is a beautiful grace in the reflections of our children. Generally, children younger than age seven experience God primarily through the language of joy and thanksgiving. Joy for them and for us!

During Advent, I had the opportunity to share the Liturgy of the Word with the youngest members of our community during Mass. We gathered downstairs and began by setting our prayer table together (an opportunity to name each item on the table as they retrieved it, to mention briefly our color change for our prayer table cloth and an unspoken invitation to be an active participant as a table set together becomes ‘our’ table). It was the first week of Advent and the second reading included the passage from Romans mentioned above.

I printed this verse on a prayer card just in case we had an early reader with us. The words on that prayer card were the actual words that are given to us in our Holy Bible. For our Holy Bible is a great gift and, in my experience, that gift does not require a revision in wording in order to be shared with our youngest. Rather than change what is literally one of the most evocative and poetic books in all of history, we used a much smaller piece of it for reflection, just one verse. We began with what is familiar to the child. In this verse, the concepts of armor and darkness were good concrete starting points.

Together, we began our conversation with a few questions around what they already knew. “Does anyone know what armor is? What does armor do? Does it protect only a portion of us? I wonder what an armor of light would be like? Light is very different from darkness, yes? Have we all been in darkness? What does it feel like to be in darkness? I wonder what works of darkness would be like?” At some point, I re-read the verse with an invitation to continue to share with the group: “I wonder what is meant by this?” Conversations like these proceed slowly and without a written script as wonder and discovery take time. A discussion will usually follow once the group is comfortable with each other but even if it doesn’t, silence in our very busy world is a perfectly acceptable response to some of these very big thoughts.

Sometimes adults can worry that unscripted conversations like these will move a little ‘off track’,

—continued inside
12:05 Daily Mass Intentions and Presider

Monday
3/2
Elizabeth Greenele (D)
Presider: Fr. Hannafey SJ

Tuesday
3/3
Arthur L. Farris (D)
Presider: Fr. O'Donnell SJ

Wednesday
3/4
Kenneth R. Sonderquist (D)
Presider: Fr. O'Donnell SJ

Thursday
3/5
Thomas Convery (D)
Presider: Fr. Hannafey SJ

Friday
3/6
Michael Faucher (D)
Presider: Fr. O'Donnell SJ
12:30 PM
Litany of the Sacred Heart

Saturday
3/7
Old St. Joseph's Memorial Society
Anointing of the Sick
Presider: Fr. Hannafey SJ

Saturday–Sunday
5:30 PM
Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ
7:30 AM
Presider Fr. O'Donnell SJ
9:30 AM
Presider: Fr. Hannafey SJ
11:30 AM
Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ
6:30 PM
Presider: Fr. Hannafey SJ

A Note from the Pastor

The Jesuit provincial has re-assigned Fr. Ed Dougherty SJ from his ministry at Old St. Joseph’s to the ministry of prayer for the Church and the Society while in residence at Manresa Hall at St. Joseph’s University. We will miss Fr. Dougherty and wish him God's blessings in his continued ministry.

--Fr. Walter F. Modrys SJ, Pastor

Becoming a Parishioner

Registering as a parishioner at Old St. Joseph’s helps the parish serve you better. It allows you to sign up for periodic emails about parish life and gives the staff a way to reach you. Registering as a parishioner helps put you in touch with the Young Adult Community, the Eldership Community, and other parish ministries. It’s also the first step in setting up online giving. Not yet registered? You can find registration forms in the back of the church and at oldstjoseph.org under the heading Parish Life/Become a Member.
—continued from front page

as all conversations sometimes do. You need only redirect with a statement connecting it to Jesus or our Mass or the people of that time; there are so many options. “You have probably heard before that Jesus said I am the light of the world. I wonder if Jesus’ words have any connection to an armor of light?” Or mentioning that we have a gesture in Mass, the Sign of the Cross, that is made over our whole body and wondering if that might be like an armor. Or (for a child older than age six) that the people who would have first heard these words knew about Jesus’ teachings while he was here with us on earth and were wondering how Jesus would have wanted us to throw off works of darkness and put on the armor of light. We can also remember that, as with all great conversations, listening is as important as talking.

Considering fewer verses, but more deeply, helps our children (and us) witness the mystery that is the Word of God as it unfolds to them. Discussion leads to the possibility of independent discovery which allows them to continue these thoughts after our time together at their own pace. Providing small pieces for consideration makes these discoveries more accessible, manageable, and usually leaves them wanting more.

Perhaps the development of faith is not the result of a ‘pouring in’ of information, especially for our youngest children. We can wonder if faith is more of an awakening of what is inherently already deep within: literally a firmly established connection to the Creator established at the first moment of conception and strengthened through Baptism. This type of relationship, as with other bonds, is strengthened over time and with familiarity. And, as is often the case when we consider God in our lives, is most poignant when experienced through the lens of mystery and awe in moments of self-discovery. Of course, there is much to learn through the lens of our faith and some of that will need to be formally taught. But we might want to encourage familiarity and a personal relationship first.

So, even if all this feels a little intimidating, I would encourage you to share our Holy Bible and our lived faith with our youngest often. The more you share, the more they will share with you. Begin with the most concrete, with Jesus: a real person who lived in a real place in a real time. The teachings of Jesus are filled with hope and offer endless reflection for all of us, even our youngest. I promise you that our young children are capable of deep, sincere, and joyful contemplation of and encounter with God. Looking for a little joy? Look no farther than our children!

—Carol Hanlon

PS—I’ll leave you with one final thought: It is far too easy to focus only on a ‘correct’ way to do something. But in many areas of faith, we are graced with the gift of variety, especially in the area of prayer. We literally have so many ways to pray. So, if you are praying in a way that works for you, it is good. And if you are praying with children, it is very good!

Front page image: Photo by Melissa Askew on Unsplash.
Announcements

Giving Hope to All 2020
The Archdiocese of Philadelphia’s annual Catholic Charities Appeal, Giving Hope to All, supports the work of 180 beneficiary organizations in the city. The appeal funds education, including four schools for special education, over 100 social service organizations, sixteen mission parishes, and archdiocesan programs for evangelization and retired clergy. Last year, Old St. Joseph’s raised 114% of the appeal goal set for it by the archdiocese. For more information on making a contribution, visit catholiccharitiesappeal.org, email cca@catholicfoundationphila.org or call 215-587-5650.

Waldron Mercy Events
Waldron Mercy Academy invites you to learn about the benefits of our school at two March events: an Open House on Tuesday, March 3 at 9:00 AM and an Information Session on Tuesday, March 10 from 6:30–8:30 PM at Santucci’s, 6164 Ridge Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19128.
Waldron Mercy is a Catholic, coeducational, independent school sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy. Please register for these events by visiting www.waldronmercy.org or emailing jmcdonnell@waldronmercy.org.

Catholic Relief Services’ Rice Bowl
Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Rice Bowls are available in the back of the church Through Rice Bowl, faith communities throughout the United States put their faith into action through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Lenten alms donated through the Rice Bowl this year will be sent to over 100 countries where CRS works. Additionally, 25% of all donations stay within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and are earmarked for its Nutritional Development Services.

Kneeling at Prayer and other Lenten Practices
During Lent, we are asked to devote ourselves to seeking the Lord in prayer and reading Scripture, to service by giving alms, and to practice self-control through fasting. The giving of alms is one way to share God's gifts—not only through the distribution of money, but through the sharing of our time and talents. As St. John Chrysostom reminds us: "Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2446). Catholic Relief Services' Rice Bowl is one way to give alms during Lent; pick up a Rice Bowl and calendar in the back of the church or visit crsricebowl.org to learn more.

The second Vatican Council encourages all the faithful to take “full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy.” Active participation takes many forms. When we gather for prayer, especially the Eucharist, we bring our entire selves, body, mind and spirit to worship. We open our minds and hearts to the praise and worship of God, and we use our bodies to express these inner sentiments.

During this Lent, we will kneel for the Penitential Rite at the beginning of Sunday Eucharist. Being on our knees before God as we pray the Confiteor reminds us in body and soul that we are continually in need of God’s mercy.
Announcements

St. Joseph’s Feast Day Celebration!
Come celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph on Thursday, March 19 with Mass at 6:00 PM followed by dinner at 7:00 PM in Barbelin Hall. Tickets for the dinner are on sale now in the parish office; $10 for adults; children eat for free. Donations of wine and desserts will be greatly appreciated.

We also need volunteers to cook on Wednesday, March 18 and for set up, serving and cleanup on Thursday, March 19. Please contact Joe Casey at parishlife@oldstjoseph.org or at 215-843-3573 for more information.

Reading Group’s March Selection
The OSJ Reading Group will meet on Tuesday, March 3 at 7:30 PM in the Loyola Room of the parish offices. This month’s book is Valeria Luiselli’s Lost Children Archive. Luiselli is a Latina writer who takes on the subject of families and immigration. New members are welcome. For information, contact shlosscarol@gmail.com.

Preparing for First Communion
Second-graders in PREP (Parish Religious Education Program) at Old St. Joseph’s will receive their First Communion on Sunday, May 3 at 9:30 AM Mass. On Wednesday, March 4 from 7:00-8:30 PM in Barbelin Hall, Fr. Walter Modrys will meet with the parents of first communicants to talk about preparing for First Communion.

Creation and the Cross Today!
Gerard Jacobitz’s final talk on Elizabeth A. Johnson’s Creation and the Cross will take place today, Sunday March 1, at 1:15 PM in Barbelin Hall. If you missed Gerard’s first two talks and would like to hear a recording of it, please contact bjbrown@oldstjoseph.org.

Sharing the Eucharist with the Sick
The Eucharistic Home Visit Ministry is rooted in the Gospel’s call to visit the sick. At OSJ, we continue this centuries-old practice by bringing the Eucharist to those who are homebound and cannot join us at Mass. They can receive spiritual nourishment and be reminded that they are a part of our community.

If you are interested in becoming a member of this ministry of service and compassion, please contact Neal Hébert at homeEM@oldstjoseph.org.

A Ministry of Hospitality
Welcome! That’s an important word at Old St. Joseph’s. Hospitality is an important part of our parish life, and if you would like to share it with others, please consider serving as an usher during our liturgies.

We’ll work closely with you during training and on scheduling. You’ll have an opportunity to deepen your connection to our parish and to meet new friends. Please introduce yourself to an usher after Mass or email ushers@oldstjoseph.org to sign up.
INFORMATION

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

Parochial Vicar
Fr. Frank Hannafey SJ (fhannafey@oldstjoseph.org)

In Residence
Br. Robert Carson SJ
Fr. Ed O’Donnell SJ (eodonnell@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)

Director of Hospital Ministry
Tom Volkert (hospitalEM@oldstjoseph.org)

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 7:00 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.

Registration
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. They can be returned to the parish office by mail or in person.

Sacrament of Reconciliation
A priest is available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation Monday through Saturday from 11:30 AM – 12:00 PM or by appointment.

Sacrament of Baptism
If you want to arrange a baptism, please contact Fr. Hannafey (fhannafey@oldstjoseph.org) at least two months before the desired date.

Eucharist for the Homebound
To arrange to receive Communion at home, please contact the parish offices.

The Sacrament of Anointing
The Sacrament of Anointing (the sacrament of the sick) is offered 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
If you want to be married at Old St. Joseph’s, please visit our website, oldstjoseph.org and read the material under the heading Weddings. Please call the parish office at 215-923-1766 at least nine months before your desired wedding date.

Rite of Christian Initiation
If you are an adult wishing to be baptized, or to receive First Eucharist and Confirmation, or are a baptized non-Catholic seeking full communion with Catholic Church, please call the parish office or email rcia@oldstjoseph.org.

Mass of Christian Burial
To schedule a funeral or memorial Mass, ask your funeral director to call the parish office.

Parish Pastoral Council
(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 (leadership@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Life
Joe Casey (parishlife@oldstjoseph.org)

Ignatian Spirituality and Formation
Len Mancini (osjspirituality@oldstjoseph.org)

Women, Faith and Fellowship
Rana McNamara (wff@oldstjoseph.org)

Young Adult Community
(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 Szgorich (ushers@oldstjoseph.org)

Children’s Liturgy of the Word
Peggy Connolly (clow@oldstjoseph.org)