

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church

Parish in Paradise



Newsletter

Feb/March 2022 ♦

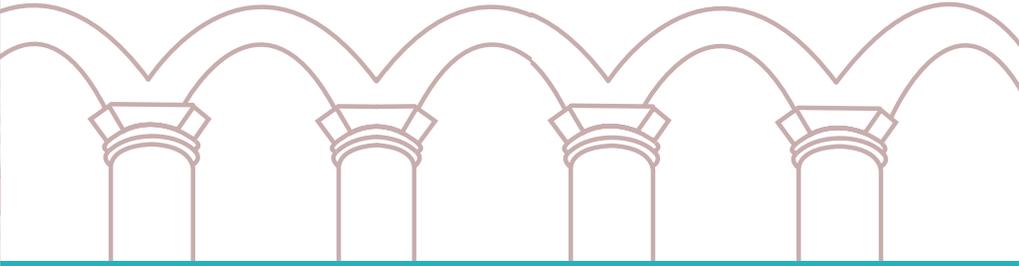
ISSUE 32



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✦ From the desk of the pastor

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Lent is a penitential time. Lent is a time when people come to terms with their sins; their limitations; and their attachments to prepare for a real communion with God. It prepares us for Easter. It makes us ready! We go into the desert.

It is with great joy I welcome you to this Holy Season called Lent. I pray it will be your best Lent ever!

The psalm for the First Week of Lent said, “Be with me Lord when I am in trouble” (Ps. 91.) I feel that in these times that we are living, we need to allow these words to resonate with all of us. It seems we all can identify with being in trouble some time in our lives.

St. Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 1:3-4, “Blessed be God who comforts us in all our trials.” Lent reminds us that for us Christians, suffering is inevitable. Jesus went through the ultimate suffering that brings us salvation. Moreover, we are called to pick up our daily cross and follow in his footsteps. We can all rest assured that God never gives us more than we can bear. On the journey of carrying our cross, we will encounter Simons and Veronicas. God has placed them on our path to assist us in the time of our need.

May we all enter this penitential season with contrite hearts and use the tools necessary to become holy.

Lent involves three practices -- prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Prayer “is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God.” To raise our mind and heart to God means to attend to God. It means being aware of God. It means seeking communion with God in a conscious way. The essence of prayer is the basic move towards Jesus. Mass is the greatest prayer. Go back to Mass if you have stopped. Maybe you can add another day to attend Mass in the week. Praying the Rosary daily or once a week can also be helpful.

This is a very helpful prayer as well. “Lord Jesus Christ, son of the living God, have mercy on me a sinner.”

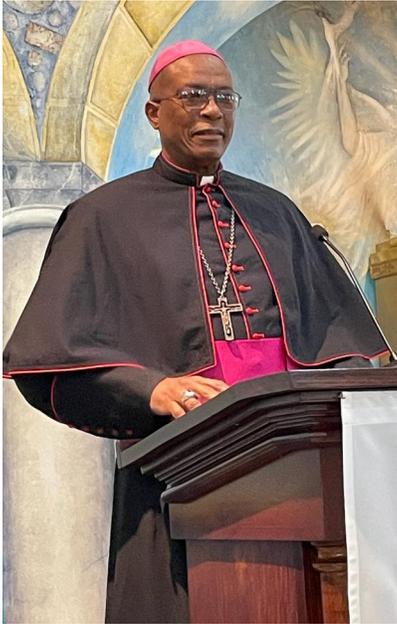
Attend Stations of the Cross in your parish or do your own Station with family and friends. The Holy Hour -- spend some time before the blessed sacrament. Start maybe with 15 minutes if an hour is difficult at first. Scripture says long before dawn Jesus rises and spends time with the Father. We must emulate the life of Jesus in prayer.

May God give us the grace to make this our best Lent ever.

In Christ,

Fr. Anthony Abraham
Pastor

Lenten Mission



▲ The Most Rev. Kenneth Richards, the Archbishop of Kingston, Jamaica, was the guest speaker for the Lenten Retreat at OLMC on Friday, March 18, 2022. Richards also held retreats on St. Thomas and St. Croix and a youth retreat on St. Thomas.



Youth MINISTRY News



The OLMC Youth Group has been busy with many opportunities for fun, prayer, learning and service. Some of their recent experiences include:

🙏 The Youth Group held their monthly Mass in Coral Bay on Sunday, March 20, 2022.

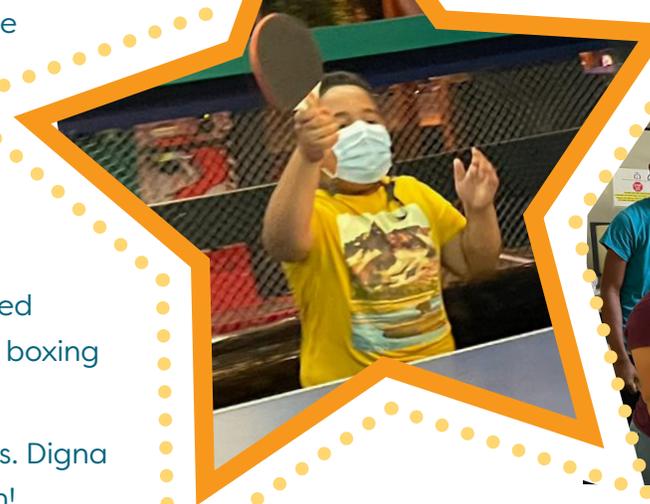
📊 Dee Wells made a presentation on finances to the Youth Group on Monday, March 21, 2022.

🏞️ The Youth Group hiked to Peace Hill for a time of reflection during Lent.

🍳 The Youth Group did some cooking in the OLMC kitchen.

🎮 The Youth Group and others had a fun day at *Chicken and Bowling* on St. Thomas. Activities included bowling, ping pong, hockey, boxing and racing games.

❤️ A huge **THANK YOU** to Ms. Digna Doway for leading the youth!



When Did I Stop Learning?

By Claudia Verdant

The Tuesday before Ash Wednesday my friend Marc and I were talking and the conversation topic turned to Lent. We talked about the purpose of Lent, what we were taught as kids, and how to choose something to give up. Marc shared with me that he believes Lent is meant for us to focus on the things that takes us away from God or distracts us from His word. Once we've identified those things, we should remove them. Thus, creating an absence in our lives. We then fill that absence with God.

During the conversation, there were a couple of Lenten practices and rules we disagreed on. Though the conversation ended agreeably, I felt two conflicting emotions: longing and disappointment.

I longed to know who was right. Therefore, I called Father Christopher Adunchezor, a Catholic priest who served in South Korea with Marc and I. Once the debate was settled, the next thing I had to do was to figure out why I was disappointed.

I realized my disappointment stemmed from my feelings about my Catholic education and I acknowledged that throughout the years I failed in continuing my Catholic education. I started asking myself what happened to my adult faith formation and when did I stop learning?

As children, we're placed within a Religious Education Program where the curriculum guides you from first to eighth or ninth grade when you receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. The curriculum is based on a spiral approach to learning with the same fundamental Catholic topics (e.g., Creed, Prayer, Moral Life) presented in each grade each year so that the individual gradually deepens their understanding of the faith and grow spiritually.

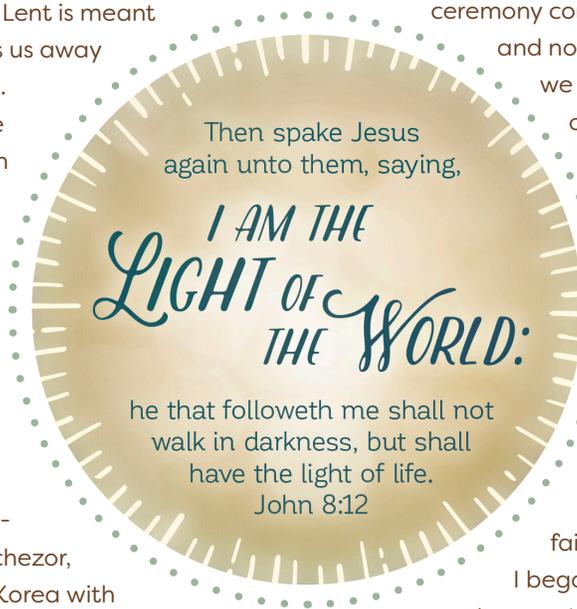
While this is great, what happens to the individual after Confirmation? For some, there is a tendency to treat Confirmation as a graduation. We have successfully completed the course of study (i.e., years of Religious Education classes), we had a ceremony conferring the degree (i.e., the sacrament), and now we're ready to enter the work force (i.e., we are strengthened for service to the Body of Christ). We all know once you graduate from high school or begin to live on your own, learning is no longer compulsory but voluntary.

As I reminisce on my first few years of college, I did not read the Bible and my attendance at Mass and participation in the Sacraments was abysmal. Lastly, I failed to recommit myself to the personal responsibility of continuing to grow in knowledge and faith. Though my actions have changed and I began serving within the Catholic community wherever I was stationed, I am still in need of continuing my Catholic education.

I think this is perhaps one of the reasons why the Catholic Church has seen a decline in young adults attending Mass and practicing their faith. We have chosen not to continue learning about God and Jesus Christ. We have chosen to put everything else above Him. This choice prevents us from growing in both human and spiritual maturity and in all dimensions of adult life (e.g., relationships, communicating our faith, family life).

Myself, like many others, must take personal investment in our faith formation after Confirmation and continue the lifelong process of learning and knowing God for it reaps immeasurable benefits:

- † Enabling an everlasting conversation with God,
- † Inviting an ongoing conversion to Jesus in Holiness of Life,
- † Promoting our active membership within our community, and
- † Beginning to reflect the Light of Life in our thoughts, words, and deeds.



◆ Claudia Verdant, a St. John resident, is a Major in the U.S. Army. She is also a parishioner of OLMC.

Catholics receive Ashes on Ash Wednesday



Ash Wednesday in Cruz Bay (above) and in Coral Bay (below).



New Parish Council & Finance Committee



Fr. Anthony Abraham installed the new Parish Council on Sunday, Feb. 27, 2022.



Fr. Anthony Abraham installed the Finance Committee on March 13, 2022. The members are Lakeya Abbott, Justina Abraham, Ralph Antolino, Rosemund Boyd, Chemica Jackson-Otto, Shanekua Lee-Tyrell & Francis Peltier.



Project Homeless Connect

Project Homeless Connect will be held on May 20, 2022, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the VIPA gravel parking lot.

The homeless and less fortunate will be served.

Volunteers are needed to assist in making this event a success. The areas that are needed are escort (ushers), giveaway table, registration table, greeters, shower attendants, clothing workers, food distribution (food handlers card is needed). A training session will be held in April.

For more information, contact Digna Doway, Catholic Charities case manager, at 340-775-0969.

FREE Health Fair

Health Screenings



- ✓ Blood Pressure
- ✓ Cholesterol
- ✓ Glucose

Myrah Keating Smith Community Health Center will hold a health fair on Saturday, April 9, 2022, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Cruz Bay Park. Services include blood pressure checks, cholesterol, vision, A1C (sugar), etc. Please fast for the blood test. This is free.

Iowa State College students



^ Iowa State College students brought greens for OLMC's soup kitchen.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Mission Statement

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church will provide support to all through the liturgy, worship and education. We pledge to provide our parish community and our visitors a prayerful experience in an environment of friendliness and courtesy. We are committed to proclaim the Word of God in unity and love towards each other.

Our mission is:

Evangelization: to evangelize ourselves, our families, our parish and our local community.

Liturgy: to celebrate our faith with joy through vibrant and prayerful worship.

Education: to educate and become educated in the truths of the Gospel and in the formation of conscience.

Service: to reach out in love and service to those in need.

Stewardship: to develop the material, financial and human resources of the Church and to manage them as faithful servants.

The **OLMC Parish in Paradise Newsletter** is composed by Fr. Anthony Abraham, Simonia Dagou, Lisa Etre and Brenda Rector Wallace.

To submit an article or for questions regarding OLMC Newsletter please contact: Lisa Etre by email at: olmc@hotmail.com

Graphic Design: Julie Vazquez

DEVOTIONS:

Eucharistic Adoration Daily: 24 hours a day

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturdays at 5 p.m.; after Masses; or by appointment

Baptism: By Appointment; 3 weeks preparation

Weddings: By Appointment; 6 months preparation

Regular Mass Schedule

Weekend: Saturdays: 6 p.m.
Sundays: 7:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m.
12:30 p.m. (Coral Bay)
5:45 p.m. (Spanish)

Weekdays:

Tuesdays: 6 p.m. (Coral Bay)
Wednesdays: 6 p.m.
Thurs & Fridays: 7 a.m.



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Jessica Schnell, PT, DPT
Chris Reinbold, PT, DPT, OC

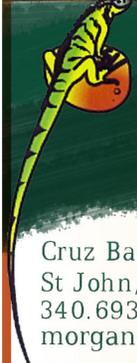


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