



FEBRUARY 2018 (YEAR B)

ST. JAMES CATHOLIC CHURCH

Monthly News Bulletin

P. O. BOX 1865, Osu- Accra

Welcome To Our Parish

MASS SCHEDULES

Morning Mass: Monday - Friday 6:30am
Sunday Mass: 8:00am

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION / CONFESSION

Saturdays at 5:30pm - 6:30pm or by
appointment.

COMMUNION TO THE SICK

Please ensure the parish office is informed of
a parishioner's ill health. Arrangements will
be made for a home or hospital visit.

BAPTISM

Dates are communicated by announcements
during Sunday Mass.

HOLY MATRIMONY

Wedding arrangements should be made with
the Parish or Associate Priest. Please contact
the Parish office at least six months prior
to wedding.

Counselling takes place twice a year:
January - June
July- December

PARISH PRIEST

Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Mawuli Tettetdji
0243 044 431

ASSOCIATE PARISH PRIEST

Rev. Fr. Prince E. Adelaayitar
0262 154 881

ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY

Maxwell Akokre
Tel: 0505 256 484 / 0302 798 781

OFFICE HOURS

Mondays 8:00am - 12:00pm
Tuesday - Friday 8:00am - 5:00pm

ST. JAMES MINI MART

Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00am - 7:00pm
Sundays 6:30am - 2:00pm



IN THIS EDITION

- Pastor's Column
- Reflections
- Empowerment Forum
- Parish News
- Spiritual Focus
- Values Matter
- Childrens Corner

Rev. Fr. Daniel Tetteji

Dear Cherished Parishioners

It is with a heart of joy that I welcome you all to the second month of the year. We can only thank God for how far has brought us. The celebration of our St James family in January was great, and we thank all whose help and service enabled the phenomenal success of the event.

I wish to highlight two main activities in February:

1.OSU DEANERY HEALTH WALK & HEALTH SCREENING: As part of the 125th anniversary celebration of the Catholic Mission in Accra, the month of February is dedicated to Health. In view of this theme, the Osu Deanery is embarking on a Health Walk and Health Screening on 10th February at 7am. The venue is St. Thomas Aquinas school, Cantonments. We are all entreated to participate in this important exercise.

Arise Catholic Faithful, Rejoice and Renew!

2.ASH WEDNESDAY ON 14TH February. Ash Wednesday opens Lent, a season of fasting and prayer. Ash Wednesday comes from the ancient Jewish tradition of penance and fasting. The practice includes the wearing of ashes on the head. The ashes symbolise the dust from which God made us. As the priest applies the ashes to a person's forehead, he utters the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Alternatively, he may say: "Repent and believe in the Gospel."

Why we receive the ashes

Following the example of the Ninevites, who did penance in sackcloth and ashes, our foreheads are marked with ashes to humble our hearts and remind us that life on Earth is transitory. We reflect on this when we are told: "Remember, Man is dust, and unto dust you shall return."

Ashes are also a sign of grieving; in this case, grief that we have sinned and caused a separation from God.

Writings from the Second-century Church refer to the wearing of ashes as a sign of penance made sacramental by the blessing of the Church, and they help us develop a spirit of humility and sacrifice.

It is important to remember that Ash Wednesday is a day of penitential prayer and fasting. Some faithful take the rest of the day off work and remain home. It is generally inappropriate to dine out, to shop, or to go about in public after receiving the ashes. Feasting is highly inappropriate. Small children, the elderly and sick are exempt from this observance.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Season of Lent. It is a season for penance, reflection, and fasting. These together prepare us for Easter Sunday: Christ's Resurrection whereby we attain redemption.

Ash Wednesday Mass will be celebrated both in the morning and in the evening so that everyone will have the opportunity to receive the ashes, which as explained above is very important.

I urge all parishioners to participate fully in all Church activities during the Season of Lent so together as a family we will be prepared to celebrate our risen Redeemer on Easter Sunday.

Shalom!

REFLECTION ON PURGATORY

" ... for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin."

[2 Maccabees, 12:44-46]

When we pray for the dead we pray for those in purgatory not those in Heaven or Hell. Their eternal abode is already determined, and they have no use for our prayers. Purgatory is that state of temporary punishment for those who though not condemned to Hell are in need of purification of sin before entering Heaven, hence the name. Souls in Purgatory are referred to as the Church Suffering, they are definitely and absolutely going to heaven, just not yet.

As Catholics we believe that Purgatory serves two purposes: a temporal punishment for sin, and a cleansing from the attachment to sin. Purgatory purifies the soul before the soul's grand entrance into heaven.

Not everyone goes to purgatory. The Church teaches that many people are purified or purged in this life, hence the term purgatory on earth.

Purgatory will cease to exist at the General Judgment. Therefore, Heaven and Hell will be the only enduring dwellings of men, and each man will spend the rest of eternity in one or the other.

The Catholic Church is convinced that God's mercy and justice must be kept intact and upheld. God's divine mercy forgives any sin as long as the sinner is truly repentant and sorry. God's justice, however, demands that good is rewarded and sin punished. We believe that purgatory fulfils God's justice while accommodating His mercy.

St Augustine, in his City of God XXI, 24, explicitly interprets Matthew 12:32: "As also, after the resurrection, there will be some of the dead to whom, after they have endured the pains proper to the spirits of the dead, mercy shall be accorded, and acquittal from the punishment of the eternal fire. For were there not some whose sins, though not remitted in this life, shall be remitted in that which is to come, it could not be truly said, 'They shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in that which is to come.'"

In our Faith there are two aspects of repentance: turning away from sin and doing penance. In other words, we should repent and atone for sin. One proof of the necessity of expiation is found in 2 Kings 12:13-18 in which David is punished by the death of his son after he has sought (and received) forgiveness.

The Bible assures us that judgment comes quickly, and unexpectedly. God has told us that He comes "as a thief in the night" several times in Holy Scripture: Matthew 24:43, for one. Also, in the book of Revelation: "Remember therefore how you have accepted and heard; keep it, and repent. If you are not watchful, I will come like a thief, and you will never know what hour I will come upon you." (Revelation 3:3)

That is where the problem comes. We may have died in the state of grace (righteousness, justice, friendship with God), yet still be defiled by sin, and nothing defiled enters the kingdom of Heaven. As it is written, "... but nothing unclean will enter it, nor any (one) who does abominable things or tells lies. Only those will enter whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27)

Sin defiles a man, otherwise sin would not matter, and anyone would be saved regardless of whether they sin or not, and whether they repent or not. But, if sin defiles us, there must be some way of being "undefiled" so that we can go to Heaven. What happens if we die before we are purged of our sins, or the effects of sin in this life? We go to Purgatory.

Any believing Christian that denies the idea of purgatory, ironically believes in having, "the best of both worlds." He can enjoy the "benefits" of the kingdom of Satan by sinning continuously, and be happy forever in Heaven immediately when he dies in his sins. But this contradicts Scripture, which shows that sin is not compatible with Heaven. And, if not all sins merit Hell in the next world, then there must be a way for sin to be forgiven and expiated for before the soul enters Heaven. We call this way Purgatory.

Scripture states unequivocally that: "For the wrongdoer will receive recompense for the wrong he committed and there is no partiality" (Colossians 3:25). Again, "... because God will bring to judgement every work, with all its hidden qualities, whether good or bad." (Ecclesiastes 12:14). God also demands that "I tell you, on the day of judgement people will enter an account for every careless word they speak." (Matthew 12:36). If the wrongdoer is punished for his wrongs, and the speaker is held accountable for his idle words, then God's justice obliges punishment for every sin. So what happens if you have some sinful "idle words" on your soul when you die? What if you die in the grace of God, but have done some wrong that you have not repented of, even a little one?

If you go to Hell in this condition, then all sins — even light ones (venial sins), condemn people to Hell. This is not only harsh, but it contradicts the word of St. John in the Bible (1 John 5:16) that says that there is a sin "unto death" and a sin "not unto death."

If you can still go to Heaven without having been forgiven your sins, then forgiveness of sins is not necessary. The logical conclusion of rejecting the doctrine of Purgatory is this: Sin does not matter.

Jesus commands perfection, and St. Paul, speaking for Jesus, guarantees that it will be given. The Holy Scripture, especially the Epistles, swarms with references to perfection and completion.

If perfection is not necessary, then the Bible not only commands something that is superfluous, but it is factually wrong in its description of Heaven as a place inhabited by among others the "spirits of the just made perfect". (Hebrews 12:23)

Now we have a variation on the question above: What happens if we die before we are "perfected" or "completed"? Do we go to Hell? Can we still be saved? Here again, the Catholic teaching is the only one that makes sense. If we die before achieving perfection, there is a place to undergo perfection. We Catholics call it Purgatory.

In the reference from Philippians, St. Paul says that the good work Christ begins in us will be perfected "until the day of Jesus Christ." The "day of Jesus Christ" is the day of the General Judgment. St. Paul was talking to people in the first century and referring to a process of perfection that could last until the General Judgment. This corresponds perfectly to the Catholic teaching that Purgatory will end at the General Judgment.

"The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace. For if to others, indeed, they seem punished, yet is their hope full of immortality; Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and found them worthy of Himself. As gold in the furnace, he proved them, and as sacrificial offerings He took them to Himself." [Wisdom 3:1-9]

A SECRET SORROW [PART 1]

By Ayesha Andrea-Apedoe

Women enter marriage with certain expectations, which may not all be met. It is worse when childbearing becomes a challenge.

Infertility is a major medical condition affecting many married couples all over the world and is often associated with socio-cultural meanings, including witchcraft in our country. Many people, irrespective of tribe, age, educational status, gender and religion blame women solely for this. Women are similarly affected whether their childlessness is due to multiple miscarriage, repeated stillbirth, loss of a child, living with an infertile partner or simply, the inability to conceive. There is a lot of pressure on couples to procreate and women tend to take it more personally, sometimes turning to dangerous treatments to accomplish this.

It is widely assumed that children hold marriages together and if they are absent, the marriage would not endure. Childlessness leads to distress, depression, anxiety, feelings of blame, low self-esteem, guilt and reduced sexual interest. In this light, one may ask the following questions: "does infertility lessen the beauty and realness of one's marriage? Does this make one's relationship, joined by holy Covenant, less complete? Can only two people be a family? If the notion of marriage is defined by procreation, then what happens when there is no issue?"

Older childless women still tear up when they talk about their condition although some say: "you accept that you are going to do your best to move on but there are days when things just become overwhelming". Others still have difficulty living the reality and dwell in endless feelings of deprivation. May God heal this pain that never seems to go away!

To be continued...

FRATERNITY AT ST JAMES FAMILY GAMES

It was an impressive display of colour. A perfect blend of the colours of the rainbow characterised the St James skyline on Sunday 21st of January 2018. The Church was blessed with a clear sky and a beautiful weather. Inside the Church, the Altar was bathed in vegetarian green slightly resembling the colour attire of the Sunday borns. It glowed where the Monday borns sat together in their mellow yellow lacostes. The Tuesday borns appeared tranquil in their Prussian blue. Wednesday borns looked like glorious heavenly bodies cascading forth in white. Thursday borns wore purple. The Friday borns had their danger (red) on, and the Saturday borns looked bright in orange. One after the other each day came to the podium, flaunting their flag and motto.

Mass was celebrated by Fr. Daniel; his message focusing on the theme of brotherliness and togetherness. This theme was re-echoed in the afternoon-to-evening games which followed. During the Offertory, it was amazing to see the whole Church in togetherness dancing to 'This is the day the Lord has made' which was melodiously sang by the Church Choir.

One by one, car after car made their way after Church towards the El-Wak Sports stadium alongside a big spacious arranged bus. "Shake your waist and shake your waist" was pouring on the dancefloor by the dancehall king Shattawale. A few people danced excitedly.

The whole group of us were treated to some marching prowess by the Day-born groups and their leaders. Tuesday borns were especially fantastic in their performance.

Volleyball, Basketball, and football competitions were keenly contested. A ferocious Tug of peace saw Wednesday borns and Saturday borns emerging as winners for men and women respectively. And the events of the day were captured on National Television (courtesy GTV).

A very special event; Mr. & Miss St James pageant was keenly contested by representatives of all day-born groups. The audience (including Fathers Prince and Daniel) and some esteemed judges were treated to sensational traditional dance performances, acting and singing as well as R&B and hiplife performances.

In the final round, contestants were asked to provide answers to the judges' question: "If you had the opportunity to make one wish what would it be?" to which we heard a host of simple, curious and unassuming answers. The entire games with competitions finally saw Saturday borns winning bronze, Friday borns winning Silver and Monday superstars winning gold.

Wednesday Royals emerged winners for Mr and Miss St James for both categories of the pageant. St James Family games was indeed a day full of unity, fraternity and togetherness. Please see overleaf for an exhaustive list of winners for the various competitions.

Written by Mena Ekua Feneba

(Miss St. James 2018)



MARY, THE ARK OF THE COVENANT (FINAL PART)*Compiled by Rev. Fr. Prince Adelaayitar*

What Makes Mary the Ark of the New Covenant?

The Ark of the Covenant was the sign of God's real presence among His people. In Jesus Christ, born of Mary, God was really present among his people in an even more direct way.

The Ark held the Word of God written in stone. Mary bore the Word of God in flesh. The Ark held the bread from heaven, a foreshadowing of the Eucharist (see 1 Corinthians 10:1-4). Mary bore the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ (see John 6:48-50). The Ark contained the rod of Aaron, symbol of his priesthood. Mary bore Jesus Christ, our High Priest (see Hebrews 3:1).

If the Ark of the Covenant was holy, then by the same standards Mary is even holier. As Mother of God, she is the Ark of the New Covenant, bearing Jesus Christ, the Word of God, the Bread of Life, our great High Priest. That is not a re-interpretation of the Gospel: it is a truth made clear by the New Testament writers themselves.

CONCLUSION

~ Take Mary home like John did - John 19:25-27

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

WHAT TO DO

- o Read about her in the Old and New Testament, every passage that talks about Mary, reflect, and try to follow her way of life

- o Read about all her apparitions
 - Guadalupe, Mexico (1531)
 - Lezajsk, Poland (1578)
 - Siluva, Lithuania (1608)
 - Laus, France (1664)
 - Rue du Bac, Paris, France (1830)
 - Rome, Italy (1842)
 - La Salette, France (1846)
 - Lourdes, France (1858)
 - Champion, Wisconsin (1859)
 - Filippsdorf, Czech Republic (1866)
 - Pontmain, France (1871)
 - Gietrzwałd, Poland (1877)

- Knock, Ireland (1879)
 - Fatima, Portugal (1917)
 - Beauraing, Belgium (1932)
 - Banneux, Belgium (1933)
 - Kibeho, Rwanda (1981)
- o Follow all her feasts, celebrating them with purity, love and devotion
 - o Do the novena's that prepare for her feasts
 - o Consecrate yourself to her yearly and daily - True Devotion to Mary
 - o Pray the Rosary daily - very important!!! (54 DAY NOVENA!!!)
 - o Pray and wear the scapular
 - o Tell others about her

~ The ultimate goal

- o That we too might become little arks of the covenant
- o To carry the word of God in our minds and hearts, the bread of life (Holy Communion) in our hearts and beings, and to be priests as Jesus offering our lives and everything we do and say to God

~ Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalene de'Pazzi, OCD, a revered authority on Carmelite spirituality, wrote that devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel means:

- *"Our Lady wants us to resemble her not only in our outward vesture but, far more, in heart and spirit. If we gaze into Mary's soul, we shall see that grace in her has flowered into a spiritual life of incalculable wealth: a life of recollection, prayer, uninterrupted oblation to God, continual contact, and intimate union with him. Mary's soul is a sanctuary reserved for God alone, where no human creature has ever left its trace, where love and zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of mankind reign supreme. [...] Those who want to live their devotion to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel to the full must follow Mary into the depths of her interior life. Carmel is the symbol of the contemplative life, the life wholly dedicated to the quest for God, wholly orientated towards intimacy with God; and the one who has best realized this highest of ideals is Our Lady herself, 'Queen and Splendor of Carmel'."*

VALUES MATTER

In these days of human rights advocacy, many of us perceive that we have the right to do whatever we please as individuals. We lose sight of the fact that a society without values cannot respect rights. To put it more succinctly, human rights thrive in a society that appreciates and respects values since human rights are fundamentally values-oriented. When we look around us, it is difficult to identify a Ghanaian value that holds true today. In our naivety, we adopt almost everything we consider Western. Unfortunately, many of us do not know that the western cultures have values that they hold highly. Did you know that America continues to teach people to be courteous, especially, on commercial transport on a daily basis by asking that people give up their seats for the elderly and pregnant women? Did you also know that seats closer to the doors of commercial transport are designated for persons with disability in the U.S and passengers will always leave that seat empty or immediately vacate it when a person with disability gets on board? Children are also socialised right from school age to be punctual and they seldom depart from it in their adulthood.

In the absence of any such national standards in Ghana, we may recall those moments when we got on board a 'trotro' and occupied the first convenient seat and looked on with pity or sometimes unconcerned as a person with disability, an elderly person or pregnant woman struggled past us to get a back seat. This is not the only inconvenience they encounter. They also have to constantly change seat because someone needs to alight from the car. Sometimes, we even struggle with them to get a seat or priority service in a public space. We are constantly and regularly late to events and often blame traffic although we are able to make it on time to catch a flight. One wonders if the same excuse can be made for being late for Mass on Sunday when there is no traffic. It appears we cherish our sense of lack of punctuality to the extent that we affectionately call it 'Ghanaian time'. It is not enough to be recognised as hospitable. In fact, even our hospitality appears to be questionable because we exhibit it mostly towards foreigners.

Cherished readers, have we wondered why people become 'better' after residing outside Ghana? In my opinion, it is because they get oriented with values and live disciplined lives. As Christians who are called upon to live disciplined lives, our ability to do so should not be dependent on which society we find ourselves in but rather, our individual commitment to be disciplined. Otherwise, our values will become subject to where we find ourselves, whether or not the influence is good. Let us learn to do the right thing, even in the absence of national standards, and influence change. I encourage us to personally commit to a set of values and practice them as we continue to pray for Mother Ghana for God's grace to instil some discipline in our society which is fast losing its morality and sense of discipline.

Looking for Jesus

Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" Mark 1:36-37 (NIV)

The puzzle is based on Mark 1:35-39



O P L F L E W Q N E A R B Y I
 I C R C A G S K Q V A Q R X M
 H D T E M V J E S U S B O O Y
 N G H R A G A L I L E E L R E
 C V B F R C S W I H Y F A C O
 D C I T O D H B N C O T A S C
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 R F M Y L F N H N L P O D Y G
 A P Q O E A C D O B O E D Y M
 H P C L R O G S J L S W M J K
 O Y R N K N F E A H E M L R T
 R Z T A M V I X S O A F A S F
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 R A X I Y E W Q G S L Q Z H X
 K Y R C B V D X F E Y R H S N

PREACH
HOUSE
VILLAGES

NEARBY
EARLY
JESUS

MORNING
DARK
SOLITARY

LOOK
PRAYED
LEFT

GALILEE
PLACE
FOUND

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WEEKDAY ACTIVITIES

Mondays

Bible sharing (6:15pm - 7:30pm)

Youth Choir (7:00pm - 9:00pm)

Tuesdays

St. Anthony's Guild (6:30pm - 7:30pm)

Wednesdays

Church Choir (6:30pm - 8:30pm)

Thursdays

Youth Choir (7:00pm - 9:00pm)

Charismatic Renewal (6:30pm - 7:30pm)

Fridays

Church Choir (6:30pm - 8:30pm)

Sacred heart Confraternity (6:30pm - 7:30pm)



Eucharistic Adoration

Thursday preceding the first Friday of the month.

Day born groups

Last Sunday of the month after Mass or by announcement.

Faith Bookshop

Monday - Friday, 8:00am - 7:30pm

Saturdays 3:00pm - 7:30pm

Sundays 9:30am - 1:30pm