

## APRIL Newsletter

### **SPIRITUAL APRIL SHOWERS HELP YOUR FAITH FLOWER**

By: Fr. O'Dell

Here we are - April again! That means that we made it through another winter (thank the Lord). It means that we have already changed our clock forward to Daylight Savings Time and it takes a whole lot longer to get dark at night. That means the flowers are going to poke their heads through the ground pretty soon and the grass will start to turn green. It means that the weather is going to finally turn warm and stay that way. April means a lot of nice things.

April also means a lot of nice things for our faith life, too. For one thing, this April we celebrate the feast of Easter - the Resurrection of the Lord. April also gives us the opportunity to get right with the Lord in the sacrament of Reconciliation. There are a lot of chances to go to confession in order to be in the best possible spiritual space for the Easter Season. April often means that parishes schedule missions or special presentations designed to bolster the faith of their people - and there are a lot of resources available to you to strengthen your religious practice everywhere you look. April is a great time to freshen up your faith practices.

So, what are some of the special things that you can do this April to make your faith more alive and relevant. Here are some suggestions of things that you might try. First, **really live the special Easter liturgies this year**. In particular, consider attending the Easter Vigil on the Saturday night before Easter Sunday. The Easter Vigil is the most important Mass of the whole year. Come and absorb the beauty and the meaning communicated in that liturgy.

Second, **take a one day pilgrimage** to some place nearby that can help strengthen your faith. For example, take just one day and go to the Grotto of the Redemption in West Bend Iowa (about 140 miles away) and pray at that beautiful site. Go to Trinity Hills in Sioux City (75 miles down the interstate) and spend an afternoon. Visit the Cathedral in Sioux Falls and ask one of the priests or staff to give you a tour. There are a lot of little pilgrimages that you can make that will help deepen your faith.

Third, **spend an extra half hour each day reading the Bible** or some other spiritual book. For example, read about the Resurrection, the Ascension and the Pentecost in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. You would be surprised how much can change in our faith by just giving a little more time and attention to studying it.

Fourth, **get on the Formed website** for our parish every day and watch (or listen) to one of the wonderful, spiritual presentations contained on the site. They are high quality productions and are always thought provoking.

Fifth, **figure out a charitable act you can do every day in April**. Write it on the calendar so you don't forget it - and then do it. Good deeds and charitable acts are one of the legs of our spiritual practice.

These are a few ideas, but there are literally hundreds more. Look some up on the Internet, learn about others by talking with fellow Christians, read up on some of the spiritual practices of the saints in the **Lives of the Saints** and get some ideas there. Ask myself or Doug Debelak or one of the staff for some suggestions on what you can do to make April a richer spiritual month and I am sure they will have some suggestions. The point is, use this month to help fertilize your faith just as surely as you would fertilize your grass to help it grow.

God Bless you and have a wonderful April!