

BULLETIN -- APRIL 30

Thank you to our catechists Sally Augdahl and Mary Hassinger for their untiring work in preparing our First Communicants for the big day last Sunday. Thanks also to the parents for their care in fostering a spirit of devotion and respect for the Eucharist within the family. It was a joy to have so many extended family members and friends with us also, showing their support and love for our young disciples.

St. Florian next Sunday. The annual memorial ceremony and Mass honoring St. Florian, patron of fire fighters, takes place next Sunday, May 7. We are privileged to have them with us, and to have the opportunity to keep their members in our special prayer throughout the year. This is a good example of how the pastor's special assignments and apostolates become a familiar prayer intention for the whole parish, and I am supremely grateful for your including our civil servants and emergency workers, along with all those we serve in the Tribunal and in the Archives, in your own daily prayers.

Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) 2017. By now, you should have received the mailing regarding our and your part in this year's Appeal. Again, we'll ask that, if you are registered in the parish and / or worship with us regularly and have not yet gotten anything from the Bishop's office in the mail, please let us know and we shall be happy to accommodate you. Once you receive your envelope and Appeal contribution form, you may fill out your pledge and gift information and 1) drop it in the regular collection at any weekend Mass, or 2) drop it through the mail slot at the parish office (convent) or through the milk chute on the back of the rectory, or 3) mail it in to the parish with the address showing in the window envelope. You may make a one-time gift, but many find it easier and more convenient for their budget to make a pledge of a certain amount monthly or quarterly. Whatever your gift or situation, thank you so much for your prayerful consideration and for your generosity.

Cheers! Retired Pope Benedict XVI marked his 90th birthday on Easter Sunday, but the celebration took place on Easter Monday to avoid conflicting with the Lord's



Day. Behold, we have found a wonderful picture of the Holy Father relaxing with his brother, Msgr. Georg Ratzinger, and friends at the monastery where he lives on the grounds of Vatican City. Note that he is enjoying a beer. And not just a thimble full. Clearly, His Holiness subscribes to the theology behind the familiar West Side hymn, "In Heaven There Is No Beer, That's Why Drink It Here!!" Obviously

we are not hereby encouraging anyone who has a difficulty with addictive behaviors to throw caution to the winds. The point is that enjoying and celebrating life are healthy pursuits that can keep us physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually refreshed, at any age, as long as they are appropriate to the person and done in moderation.

Good work! Our Holy Thursday “Washing of the Feet” collection brought in **\$418.00**, which has been turned over to Capitol Lunch to feed the hungry of our community. The Good Friday collection for the maintenance of the shrines of the Holy Land amounted to **\$639.00**. God bless you for your generosity!

Why come back? A man was recently telling a fellow priest that, after over 20 years away, this past Christmas he began considering coming back to the Church. In the last few months, he visited several different parishes for Sunday Mass. His travels left him feeling disappointed and discouraged, and he has decided against any further church attendance. His reasons stem from the following things he noticed:

1. No one says hello.
2. No one sings the hymns.
3. Lack of reverence in the Eucharistic celebration.
4. Homilies are often boring and trite.
5. Priests are aloof.
6. People are just taking Holy Communion and exiting before Mass has ended.

The man admitted he had probably gotten spoiled by some years of attendance at various Protestant churches. I will admit that Catholic congregations at Mass often seem like a random gathering of unrelated individuals rather than a cohesive body. True, our attention at Mass should be focused on God rather than on one another. We are there to worship God, not ourselves. Yet it doesn't hurt a bit to turn quietly to someone near us whose name we do not know and introduce ourselves with, “Hi, I'm so-and-so, and I'm afraid I've either forgotten or never learned your name.” These spring days are ideal for walking out with them when Mass is over and finding out a bit more about them.

Heard of: germline editing? This is the procedure of scientifically altering the DNA of human sperm, egg, or early embryo in order to change the genetic makeup of a human being. While it is being recommended as conceptually “ethical” by an international committee organized by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Medicine, the members acknowledged that “more research” is necessary before a clinical trial may take place. The committee has suggested that the procedure might be available in very limited circumstances, such as when a couple is facing a strong possibility of genetic disorders in any child they conceive together. The danger is that we've heard about “limited circumstances” before. Those are the parameters that have guided the acceptance of things like divorce, birth control, abortion, euthanasia, “medical” marijuana, and all kinds of other “tinkering” with moral issues affecting life, family, and the dignity of the human person. The phrase “slippery slope” is a very apt one here, in spite of the objections of so many who always perceive slippery slopes as perfectly level high ground. Before very long, before we know it, germline editing will be available in clinics where couples may not only name their child, but choose hair color, eye color, height, etc. “We're going baby shopping!” an excited couple might boast; while the unfortunate children waiting for foster homes will be condemned to wait still longer. Or perhaps by then they can be directed to centers for the

less genetically appropriate, where their organs can be pragmatically harvested and the “donors” then eliminated because of their cost and their lack of usefulness to the state. But only in limited circumstances, of course. God help us! And God bless *you*!

Fr. Den

Thought for the week: Accusations often reveal more about the character of the accuser than they do about the actions of the accused.