

ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL // LOS ANGELES, CA // SPRING 2022

# *CATHEDRAL LIFE*

## *Springtime In Our Souls*

**BY FR. DANIEL ADE  
DEAN AND RECTOR**

We publish this edition of Cathedral Life just as we are about to enter Lent. The name itself comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word, 'lencten' or lengthen, and a word for spring, since the days lengthen throughout the season and the Season of Lent moves towards Holy week and the brightness of Easter.

Every year, as Winter ends and Spring begins, I work with a gardener to clear out the dead leaves and trim the branches in our garden at Clergy House to prepare for the new growth about to emerge. Lent provides us the chance to work with Jesus, the gardener of our souls, to clear the old growth from our hearts and to make room for new life and renewal.

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We make the Lenten opportunity tangible in the custom of burning palms on Shrove Tuesday, the evening before Lent begins. As those flames leap up on the plaza of the Cathedral, a sign of what we need to release from the prior year, we see not only the ashes used the next day to mark our repentance, but the bright light shining ahead of us announcing the day.

Ash Wednesday literally marks us with the sign of our mortality – remember you are dust and to dust you shall return -- an invitation to renewal. To repent, means to start all over again, to burn the branches no longer bearing fruit in our lives, to invite the Holy Spirit to shine a light into our dark places for healing and “spring cleaning.”

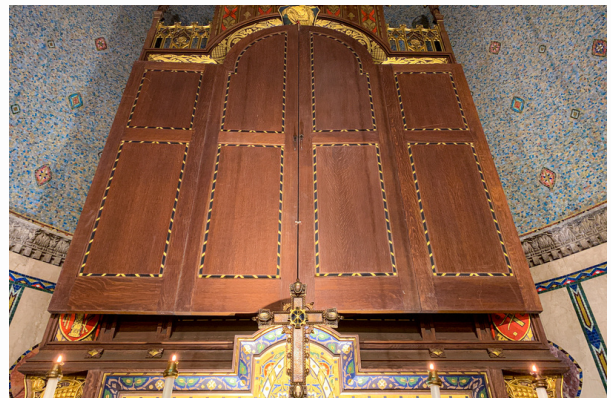
The liturgy of Ash Wednesday is important therapy and medicine to begin the healing process Lent offers. That’s why we are encouraged to come together on this day as a community to begin this journey. We hear and say the prayers, we are marked with ashes and again listen to the words of Psalm 51, a Psalm of turning:

*For behold, you look for truth deep within me,  
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.  
Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure;  
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.  
Make me hear of joy and gladness,  
that the body you have broken may rejoice.  
Hide your face from my sins \*  
and blot out all my iniquities.  
Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from your presence  
and take not your holy Spirit from me.  
Give me the joy of your saving help again  
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit. (7-13)*

The essential element of our worship on this day is that it is communal. While our spiritual renewal is personal it isn’t private. We do it together. Remember that ashes are only a sign of the interior

spiritual renewal. While they are a significant symbol, they aren’t essential to the work of Lent.

We still are in the last days of COVID-19, hopefully, and some of us still may not want to join in the liturgy of this day, or the weeks of Lent in person. While physical presence is the norm and the ideal, digital presence still is presence. Those joined to the community through electronic connection are connected to the rest of us as we enter Lent together. Even though those digitally present may not receive physical ashes, each of us can invite the Holy Spirit to bring renewal and springtime to our souls as we prepare for the Easter Feast through participating in this day.



Our Shrove Tuesday burning of palms and prayers of preparation will be digital only. Our two services of Ash Wednesday, held at Noon and at 6:30, will both be in person and livestreamed enabling members of our community to join us in either mode.

I conclude with the words of the Prayerbook spoken before ashes are distributed:

*I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church,  
to the observance of a holy Lent,  
by self-examination and repentance;  
by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading  
and meditating on God's holy Word.*

These are the tools of Lent. May Jesus the divine gardener bring springtime to our souls.



## Transfiguration

BY FR. MARK KOWALEWSKI  
DEAN AND RECTOR

A few years ago, I encountered a mystical poem written by the medieval visionary Mechtild of Magdeberg titled *Transfiguration*. Our choir sang the words in an evocative setting by Craig Philips, a renowned Los Angeles composer, and director of music at All Saints Church, Beverly Hills:

*O burning mountain,  
O chosen sun,  
O perfect moon,  
O fathomless well,  
O unattainable height,  
O unattainable light,  
O clearness beyond all measure,  
O wisdom without end,  
O mercy without all limit,  
O strength beyond resistance,  
O crown of all majesty,  
All creation humbly sings your praise:  
Bright stars, high mountains, depths of the seas,  
rushing waters,  
All these break into song at heaven's proclamation:  
This is my Son, my beloved, My chosen One. Alleluia!*

As the title suggests, Mechtild gives voice, not to the event of the Transfiguration in history, but to the experience of both Jesus' transfiguration and ours. Philip's music opens the door to the encounter with Jesus on the mountain top not as an observer, but as a participant. We ourselves come close to the burning mountain and hear the words addressed to Jesus and to each of us, "my beloved, my Chosen One." Alleluia isn't just a word to end the sentence. Philips' music erupts in rapture in the union of our soul with Christ transfigured.

Every year on the last Sunday in the season of Epiphany, as we prepare for the beginning of Lent, we hear the story of Jesus taking three of his closest disciples up a mountain to pray and while they are there, Jesus is transfigured before them in brilliant light and cloud with Moses and Elijah appearing with him, representing the whole tradition of Israel. The disciples see Jesus glorified, but then come back down the mountain as Jesus begins his journey to Jerusalem and to the cross.

The experience of meeting Jesus in the Transfiguration and then walking with him in the ordinariness of life is an image of what happens in Lent, but more importantly, what our Christian lives are all about. We may glimpse glory and light, but we also meet the darkness of life. Our lives as Christians are all about moving from death to light, from separation to unity with God and to come to experience the words of transfiguration addressed to each of us, my beloved child, my chosen one.

*Theosis* is a central element of Eastern Orthodox spirituality. It refers to the transformation of the Christian into the divine image, the image of Jesus. Each Christian through our baptism becomes anointed with the Holy Spirit as Jesus was and we begin a transformation into who we truly were created to become, not alien from our humanity but fulfilling it.

Lent provides a season to focus on our transformation. We especially look to those going through our Christian Formation process as icons for us and the work we all are invited to do. The practices we focus on in Lent are meant to assist us in our growth in Christ, but they aren't limited to Lent: prayer and worship both individual and

communal; study of the Scriptures and also about our culture and society; fasting as a means of both knowing how dependent we are on God for everything we have, and as a means of identifying with those who have no choice but to fast since they don't have enough to eat; Almsgiving, sharing what we have financially as well as our time and talent.

This Lent there are specific opportunities for engaging these practices:

- Weekly worship and digital evening prayer twice a week
- Personal prayer using the daily office of the Prayerbook or other prayer practices
- Christian Education including the Gospel of Luke class and our Lenten class called *Why the Cross?*
- Daily Bible reading can also include the lessons from the daily Office found on Forward Day by Day
- Abstain from meat at least on Fridays – a good practice all year long for your health and the health of the planet
- Abstain from things that are habitual or on which you are overly dependent (the traditional “giving up” of something)
- Fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday the traditional fast days and other days maybe not eating one meal on fast days or every day during lent

These are only some suggestions. The main point is to make our whole lives a journey up the burning mountain of transfiguration where sin and selfishness are burned away and where with all creation we can be in touch with the mystical vision of the glory of Christ.

Finally, I invite you to spend time with Mechtild's mystical poem this Lent. Let the words sink in, crack them open in your mind and heart. Hear the voice of the father calling to you, my beloved, my chosen one, Alleluia!







## *Enrich Your Spiritual Life This Holy Season*

BY DR. CHRISTOPHER G. GRAVIS  
CANON FOR MUSIC & CATHEDRAL ARTS

Lent is a time of somber musical expression in the Anglican tradition. And at St. John's Cathedral, we follow the dramatic arc of the 40 days, through the two-week Passiontide that begins on the fifth Sunday of Lent, into Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and to the profound dramatic heights of the 3-day *Paschal Triduum*. Each service contains its own liturgical character and musical ethos.

I never cease to be amazed by the extraordinary range of roles the choir must take on during Lent, and particularly during Holy Week. At Christmas, for example, the choir's liturgical role is firmly understood: sing the familiar carols, the beloved soaring descants, and lead the

congregation in *O come all ye faithful*. But during Lent, the choir becomes the proverbial Greek chorus in a dramatic story of epic proportions.

We are the mournful sinner begging mercy from God in the words of Psalm 51 on Ash Wednesday, and the penitent heart chanting the Great Litany for the first Sunday of Lent. We become the voices of Hebrew children shouting *Hosannas!* to our King on Palm Sunday, the arresting call to servanthood expressed in chant through the *Ubi Caritas* on Maundy Thursday, and the bloodthirsty crowd crying for crucifixion on Good Friday. By Holy Saturday, we are the ancient church mothers and fathers, telling the story of God's continual redemption of God's people in

the words of the *Exsultet*, chanted in the glow of the new Paschal light. And come Easter Day, we are the triumphant chorus shouting victory to our God, as the enormous doors of the triptych are opened for the first time.

It might seem a bit like musical whiplash, but the story resonates more deeply for me every year. For we are all of these things, in our many human complexities: joyous, mournful, humble, vindictive. And at the moment when it seems all hope is lost is precisely when God reaches down and pulls us from the grave our earthly existence, just as the icon reveals Adam & Eve lifted from the tomb.

It's been a long two years walking through the desert of this pandemic. The splendid music of Christmas Eve was a foretaste of the joy that awaits us on Easter Day — brass, timpani, organ, choir, and the sweet smell of flowers and incense. I look forward to once again returning to the many deeply meaningful ways music will bring us closer to the mysteries of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection this Lent and Easter.

May the music of St. John's Cathedral enrich your spiritual life this holy season.



## *Neighboring Relationships*

**MR. STEPHEN SALTS,  
DIRECTOR OF THE CATHEDRAL CHORAL ACADEMY**

As you all know, the Cathedral Choral Academy has been meeting in person again since September for our full schedule of weekly rehearsals and dinner, monthly services, and events in support of our community. The choristers are very grateful to be growing together again as musicians, as young people, as dedicated contributors to the arts at St John's, and as friends.

We are also excited to be building a new relationship as neighbors. Thanks to the introductory work of Deacon Margaret and the Deans, St John's has recently established a promising relationship with Birdielee V. Bright Elementary School, our neighbors on 36th Street.



This month, I was honored to meet with Principal Renee Smith and parents of Bright students on Zoom. I gave a presentation about the Cathedral Choral Academy, answered some engaging questions, and encouraged all who are interested to join us as new choristers and help us spread the word. Principal Smith included a detailed description of the Choral Academy and my contact information in the school's newsletter this month, as well as in email blasts and social media posts. The Bright Elementary School community is exceedingly gracious and generous, and we are all very much looking forward to building on this new partnership with them.

Thank you for your prayers and continued support of this important outreach ministry of St John's.



# *Lent & Holy Week*

## **Shrove Tuesday**

**Tuesday, March 01, 2022**

**at 6:30 pm**

Shrove Tuesday burning of palms and prayers of preparation will be digital only.

Join us online via Facebook and YouTube.



## **Ash Wednesday Holy Mass**

**Wednesday, March 02, 2022**

**at 12:00 pm & 6:30 pm**

Our two services of Ash Wednesday, held at Noon and at 6:30 will both be in person and live streamed via Facebook and YouTube.

## **Lenten Fridays**

**Fridays in Lent**

**at 12:00 pm**

Join the clergy online for short afternoon meditations on the Stations of the Cross, Fridays in Lent.

## **Lenten Book Study with Mother Lyn**

**Thursdays: March 10, 17, 24, 31 & April 7 at 7:00 pm via Zoom**

Come join us in our Lenten Book Study on Zoom each Thursday evening following Evening Prayer.

- Daily Meditations
- Coordinating Scriptures
- African American Spirituals
- Discussion Questions
- Fellowship

Order your book on online.

Scholarships available, contact Mother Lyn.



## **Why The Cross?**

**Sundays: March 20 through April 10**

**at 11:30 am**

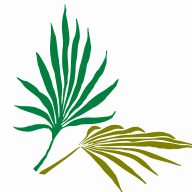
As we enter deeper into the Season of Lenten and our focus turns toward Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, to suffering, and death, the cross becomes a central focus of the church's liturgy. But why the cross? What is the meaning of Jesus death for us? What are the ways the Christian tradition understood Jesus' death as atonement for sin and means for our reconciliation? How can we come to understand the grace God gives to millions and to me and you through the cross.

## **Palm Sunday**

**Sunday, April 10, 2022**

8:00 am | Said Mass

10:00 am | Choral Mass



## **Maundy Thursday**

**Thursday, April 14, 2022**

**at 6:30pm**

In-Person & Livestreamed

## **GOOD FRIDAY**

**Friday, April 15, 2022**

**at 12:15pm & 6:30 pm**

In-Person & Livestreamed

## **GREAT EASTER VIGIL**

**Saturday, April 16, 2022**

**at 8pm**

## **EASTER SUNDAY**

**Sunday, April 17, 2022**

8:00 am | Said Mass

10:00 am | Choral Mass

# Spring Services Schedule

## Said Mass | Sundays at 8:00 am

Followed by coffee hour. (In-person Only)

## Choral Mass | Sundays at 10:00 am

Followed by coffee hour.

(In-person and online.)

## Christian Education |

Sundays at 11:30 am

(In-person and online.)

## Candlelit Compline |

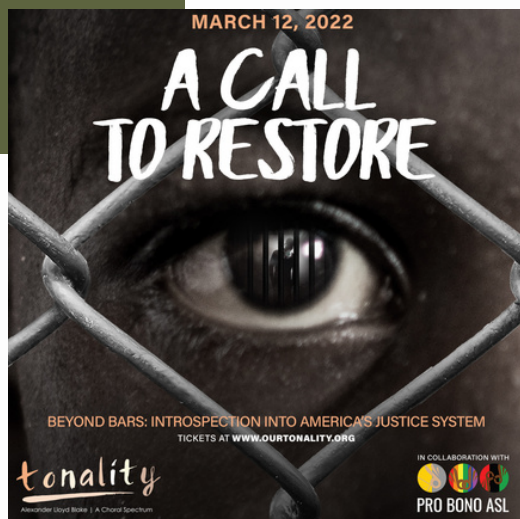
1st Sunday of the month at 8:00 pm

Followed by Social Hour. (In-person and online.)

## Evening Prayer |

Tuesdays & Thursdays at 6:30 pm

via Facebook Live



## Contact Us

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## FOOD PANTRY |

Every 3rd Saturday of the Month

8:30 am - 10:30 am

Helping families in the community with fresh produce, meats and dairy.