



Spiritual Care Notes – February 2018

Hello February! February can be that “white contrary” and can also be dark and stark. It will be weeks before any sign of garden life – but, here at Maristhill we are not lacking in spirit.

In the Catholic Church, we begin on February 2 with “The Presentation of the Lord” forty days after his birth when Jesus is taken to the temple by his Virgin Mother Mary and earthly father Joseph for Mary’s purification. This is the Jewish tradition of the woman needing to be purified after giving birth. While this was not necessary for Mary – since she was pure from the time of her own conception and always remained pure, we celebrate in this old tradition. This is the time that God presented himself bodily, in Christ, in the temple. If you still have your Christmas tree or your Manger/Creche on display – it is OK as this day marks the final day of Christmas.

February 11, 2018 is the World Day of the Sick. We offer prayer and supplication for all who suffer from physical, mental and spiritual anguish and pray for healing for all who desire it. Pope Francis recognizes health care as part of the Church’s mission. His message published on December 11, 2017 for this day World Day of the Sick reads in part: “Jesus bestowed upon the Church his healing power... The Church’s mission is a response to Jesus’ gift, for she knows that she must bring to the sick the Lord’s own gaze, full of tenderness and compassion.” Our Mission at Maristhill follows directly in line with these teachings and is put into action with the compassionate care that we give to our residents and patients. We have nearly completed an offer to all Roman Catholics the Healing Sacrament or Anointing of the Sick in anticipation of this World Day of the Sick.

February 13 is Mardi Gras or Fat Tuesday! I suggest we celebrate the day in its fullest intention, as the next day begins the season of Lent with forty days of fasting and atoning for our sins, in preparation for Easter.

February 14 is Ash Wednesday and a day for fasting and prayer!!! I am not sure how Saint Valentine’s might solve the conflict, but perhaps you can shop early and give your Valentine some chocolates for Mardi Gras!

Saint Polycarp is remembered on February 23rd as one of the earliest Christian martyrs and a true follower of Christ. He created conflict in the early Church by trying to talk to the Pope Anicetus about the date of the Easter celebration in Rome and was arrested on charges of following the cult of Christianity and was martyred in 155 AD. He was allegedly burned alive at the stake, for his beliefs in Christ. Another story goes that he further infuriated his opponents when because of God’s protection, his body would not burn and he finally died when they drove a stake through his heart. The date of Easter he was finally decided upon during the First Council of Nicea in 325 AD. In the West the date is a complicated calculation of moons and calendars, old and new, that seem to be to be one of the great mysteries of the Church. The Eastern and Western Catholics are still not unified in the Easter celebration date, and other practices.

May one day we ALL be Unified! Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists --- ALL ONE!

May we pray for Peace, Healing, Light and Love and ‘Ut Unam Sint’ – THAT ALL MAY BE ONE

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