

**BEING FOCUSED AND ENCOUNTERING GO IN THE PRESENT MOMENT**

As a result of my pontine stroke last July, I had to learn again the movements we take for granted including how to walk without losing equilibrium, how to swallow, and how to again move my left leg and left arm (including the paralyzed fingers of my left hand). The stroke had led to death of cells in my pons, which could be seen on the MRI films. I had no idea we all have a pons (Latin for “bridge”), which is the largest part of the brain stem, the key link between the brain and the spine. Following my release from the hospital, I had to spend hours of physical rehabilitation and learned that the most important way to improve, apart from prayer (and thanks for all your prayers—God listened to you), was to be totally focused!

This total focus, in turn, helped me to encounter God in the present moment, despite all the sufferings and worries. I will give the most powerful example, learning how to swallow! We do not pay attention to how to swallow. We do it automatically without thinking (our brain stem, our pons does it for us on autopilot). Following my stroke, I had to learn again how to swallow. My physical therapist told me: “Chin down”. It simply meant to keep my chin down, when chewing food or preparing to swallow water, that position facilitated the focus on and use of the relevant muscles in the mouth. Then after having swallowed well (without choking or having food/drink end up in the lungs with risks of infection, leading to pneumonia), I had to swallow twice right away to strengthen the control of those key oral muscles. Now one can ask: Ok, I get it, you have to be totally focused on what you do—no distractions, just focus on swallowing.

But where is encountering God in each present moment? The answer is simple and powerful. I discovered that when I had no distractions and I focused totally on chewing food or if I began to think about something I had to do

after the meal, or began listening to an on-going conversation at my dinner table, the results were different. To keep being focused on swallowing, I spent time chewing slowly and forcefully, until the food would become almost liquid water. I also watch the moving reflections of light within the water. In that focused way, I would never choke!

The lesson for me was simple and powerful. By having no distractions and being focused totally on the action of swallowing, I could feel the presence of God. In the absence of attachment to the outside world. I know that God is always with me, but I do not always find His Presence. Here, He was there helping me to swallow calmly and peacefully being far away from any worldly distractions. From learning how to swallow, I then developed an approach to keep focusing totally on what is going on around me or what I’m doing in the present moment. I also learned that by being totally focused on the one single task that I am doing in the present moment; I would not worry about the past nor the future.

Let us pray that God may give each one of us the desire to change, the desire to avoid worldly distractions, the desire to focus totally on the present moment, the desire to encounter God in the present moment.

One in Christ,  
*Fr. Alain*



Noviembre 4-5, 2023: 31avo. Domingo del Tiempo Ordinario

## ATENTOS ENCONTRANDO A DIOS EN EL MOMENTO PRESENTE

Como resultado del derrame que sufrí en Julio, tuve que aprender de nuevo todos los movimientos que ni siquiera notamos: incluyen caminar sin perder el equilibrio, como tragar, o como mover mi pierna y brazo izquierdo (incluyendo los dedos paralizados de la mano izquierda). El derrame mato células en mi cerebro (que se veían en el estudio de imágenes MRI que me realizaron). No tenía idea de que todos tenemos esa parte del cerebro que conecta con la médula espinal. Después de mi salida del hospital, tuve que pasar por muchas horas de rehabilitación y aprendí que para mejorar, aparte de la oración (y gracias por todas sus oraciones-- Dios los escucha), es estar totalmente atento!

Esta atención total, me ayudó a encontrarme con Dios en el momento presente, a pesar de todas las sufrimientos y preocupaciones. Les dare el más poderoso ejemplo de como aprendí a tragar! No ponemos a atención como tragar. Lo hacemos automáticamente sin pensarlo (Su cerebelo, mesencefalo lo hace por nosotros como un piloto automático. Después de mi derrame, tuve que aprender como tragar de nuevo. Me lo dijo el físico terapeuta: "quijada abajo". simplemente significa que debo mantener mi quijada abajo, cuando mastico o cuando estoy por tragar agua. Esta posición facilita la atención en usar los músculos más importantes de la boca. Y después de haber tragado bien (sin ahogarse o tener comida o haber terminado de beber y eso termine en los pulmones con el riesgo de infección o neumonía), Tengo que tragar dos veces después para fortalecer el control de los músculos orales. Ahora, se puede preguntar: Correcto, lo entiendo, usted tiene que estar totalmente atento en lo que hace: sin distracciones, solo debe estar atento en tragar.

Pero donde está el encuentro con Dios en el momento presente? La respuesta es simple y poderosa. Descubrí que cuando no tengo distracciones y estoy atento totalmente en masticar mi comida o beber agua, no me ahogo y

trago bien, nada se va hacia los pulmones. Sin embargo, si empiezo a pensar acerca de algo tengo que hacerlo después de la comida, o empiezo a escuchar una conversación en mi mesa de comedor, el resultado sería diferente, me mantengo atento al tragar, y mastico lenta y forzosamente hasta que la comida sea más líquida, también observe la luz que se refleja en el agua, de esa manera nunca me ahogare! La lección para mí es muy simple y poderosa: no teniendo ninguna distracción y atento a tragar, puedo sentir la presencia de Dios. En ausencia de apegos externos. Se que Dios siempre está conmigo, pero no siempre encuentro su presencia. Aquí, Estaba ayudándome a tragar calmado y en paz alejado de todas las distracciones del mundo. Al aprender como tragar, he desarrollado una aproximación mantenerme atento a lo que sucede a mi alrededor o lo que hago en ese momento. También aprendí que al estar totalmente atento en una sola cosa en el momento presente, no me preocupo por el pasado ni el futuro..

Pidamos a Dios que nos de a todos ese deseo de cambiar, el deseo de evitar todas las distracciones de este mundo, el deseo de estar atentos en el momento presente, deseo de encontrar la presencia de Dios en cada momento,

Uno en Cristo,

*Padre Alain*





Interested in joining & learning about the Catholic Church for the first time?  
 Want to complete a Sacrament (Baptism, Eucharist and/or Confirmation)?  
 Want to learn and understand your Catholic Faith better?

**CA**  
Catholicism  
for Adults

**RCIA**  
Rite of Christian  
Initiation of Adults

The Rite of Christian Initiation is designed for adults who seek to learn more about God, our Faith & desire to enter the Christian faith!

For more info. or to sign-up please contact  
 Deacon Rich  
 deacon@olhoc.org

**Classes Meet on  
 Wednesdays at 7 pm**  
 Location - Fr. Martin Hall

All parishioners are welcome and invited to join us!

**OLLC Early Learning Center Giving Tree**  
 Please visit our Giving Tree across from the office to help the Early Learning Center.

**Giving Tree/Supplies:**  
 Tissues  
 Paper Towels  
 Napkins  
 Kitchen Trash Bags for the classroom  
 Unscented Baby Wipes  
 Zip Lock Bags  
 (snack, sandwich, gallon, 2 gallon)  
 Glue Sticks

### Rito de Iniciacion Cristiana para Adultos (RICA)

Esta interesado en unirse o aprender sobre la Iglesia Catolica por primera vez? Desean completar sus Sacramentos (Bautismo, Eucaristia y/o Confirmacion) Quiere aprender o entender mejor la Fe Catolica El Programa del RICA (Rito de Iniciacion Cristiana) diseñado para 18 años y adultos.

Informacion con Milton Galvan/ Maria Lam 240-551-3295 Las Clases son los Domingos a las 4:30 pm Salon 103 y los martes a las 7:30 pm

**Parish School of Religion (CCD) 2023-2024**  
**CCD Registration is Open for 2023-2024**  
 Please visit the website [www.olhoc.org/re](http://www.olhoc.org/re)  
 (?’s, contact Sr Rosario [sister@olhoc.org](mailto:sister@olhoc.org))

**NEW CCD Sessions for 2023-2024**

**Sundays** Session 1 (8:45 AM - 9:45 AM) (for students in 1st & 7th grade, RCIC 1A & RCIC 2A)  
 Session 2 (10 AM - 11 AM) (for students in PK/K, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th & 8th)

**Mondays** Session 3 (5:45 PM - 6:45 PM) for students in RCIC 1B & RCIC 2B)  
 Session 4 (7 PM- 8 PM) for students in PK/K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th & 8th)

Registration for First Holy Communion 2023-2024 is open  
 visit [www.olhoc.org/1communion](http://www.olhoc.org/1communion)

Registration for Confirmation 2023-2024 is open visit  
[www.olhoc.org/confirmation-1](http://www.olhoc.org/confirmation-1)

QR codes and icons for CCD registration, Holy Hour of Reparation, and Confirmation.

**Holy Hour of Reparation**  
**Thursdays, 8 pm - 9 pm**

Spend some time with Jesus and pray for priests!

**New Format:**  
 Evening prayer  
 Silence  
 Litany of Prayer for Priests  
 Benediction

**Hora Santa**  
**jueves, 8 pm - 9 pm**

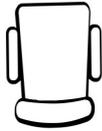
Join Fr Alain & Fr Jan pray for priests who are struggling & those who don't pray.  
 Invite other priests and lay people to join.

October 28-29, 2023: 30th Sunday in

**OLHOC is Hiring!**

**Basic Criteria for Selection include:**

- Experience in management & administration
- Strong people skills
- Commitment to maintaining confidentiality
- Proficient in computer & media skills
- Office Communication skills (verbal & written)
- Working knowledge of Spanish language desirable, but not necessary
- A strong Catholic Faith & commitment to evangelization



[www.olhoc.org](http://www.olhoc.org)



If you are interested, please submit your CV or resume to Fr. Alain by **November 8th.**

Send by email to [pastor@olhoc.org](mailto:pastor@olhoc.org) or drop off in a sealed envelope to the office.

**Thanksgiving Food Drive**

OLHOC Outreach Committee is collecting food items to fill the Thanksgiving Food Baskets for 50 needy families in our community.

Containers are located in the Narthex from Oct. 8th - Nov. 12th for the Thanksgiving Food Drive.

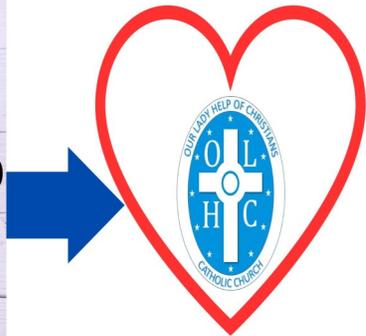


**Items needed:**

- Green Beans
- Canned Corn
- Cranberry Sauce
- Turkey Gravy (can or jar)
- Turkey Stuffing
- Sweet Potatoes
- Cash donations are also welcome to cover shortfalls.

Volunteers also needed to help deliver the baskets on November 19 after the 8:30 AM Mass.

**Consider donating your RMD**  
(Required Minimum Distribution)



As many of you are eligible to take your annual RMD (Required Minimum Distribution) from your retirement savings, please consider a tax free gift to the church!

For more details or questions, leave a message for Margie Morris or Dick Potter (Finance Council) in the parish office or email [office@olhoc.org](mailto:office@olhoc.org)

**Fotografias de Ira. Comunion 2016-17**

- Ruben Alegria Rivera
- Franklin Avila
- Ryleigh Bannan
- Tyler Cataldo
- Dominic Dorwart
- Alexander Gonzalez
- Juan Morales Servin
- Lilian Otero
- Carson Perkins
- Heriberto Ramiro Ramirez

**Por favor pasar a la Oficina a recogerlas.**

- Elizabeth Rodriguez
- Francis Rodriguez
- Jacquelyn Gisel Ruiz
- Lizeth Santamaria
- Juan Morales Servin
- Dayanara Teran Matus
- William Worrell
- Gonzalez
- Rodriguez

Please pick it up at the Parish Office.



**HOLIDAY CRAFT FAIR**

**November 4th**

**8:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

Vendors selling household items, jewelry, gifts, and miscellaneous items are all welcome.

There will also be an Attic Treasures section for flea market items.

For more information, to reserve a table or volunteer, please visit:

**Volunteers also needed!**

call Maria Lam in the office 301-645-7112

[www.olhoc.com/holidayfair](http://www.olhoc.com/holidayfair)



REMEMBER, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly to thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother; to thee do I come before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

