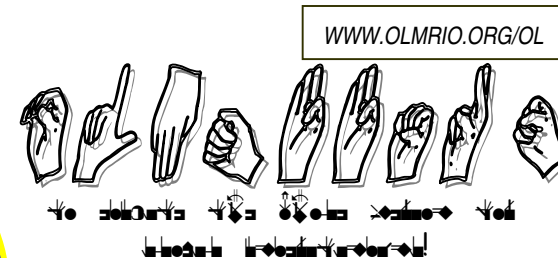


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# OLMatters

“To Educate the Whole Person for Global Understanding”

RIO DE JANEIRO,  
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## THE RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL ROOTS OF CARNIVAL

By Msgr. André Sampaio

These days, we understand carnival as a public [celebration](#) or [parade](#) combining some elements of a [circus](#) with an open-to-all street party. Carnival is often a Roman Catholic and, to a lesser extent, Eastern Orthodox celebration. (Most Protestant and Fundamentalist Protestant groups condemn the celebration.) Brazil, once a Portuguese colony, is famous for its carnival, as is **Mardi Gras** in Louisiana, where African-Americans mixed with French settlers and Native Americans.

The word carnival has passed into the vernacular and taken on a secular meaning in most areas of the Western world. The origin of the name "Carnival" is unclear. The most common theory is that the name comes from the Italian/Latin, meaning "to remove the meat" / "stop eating meat" or "farewell to meat" / "farewell to the flesh", letting go of the earthly or bodily self. This period of celebration and partying had its origin in the need to use up all remaining meat and animal products such as eggs and butter before the fasting season. Another theory states that it originates from another Latin term, which refers to a Greek cart carrying a statue of Apollo in an annual religious procession.

We receive many traditions from Europe, especially from Portugal, Spain and Italy. The tradition of holding a wild costume festival right before the first day of Lent started in Italy, a kind of “farewell party”. Catholics were not supposed to eat meat during Lent. As time passed, carnivals in Italy became quite famous; and in fact the practice spread to France, Spain, and all the Catholic countries in Europe. Then as the French, Spanish, and Portuguese arrived in America and other parts of the world, they brought with them their tradition of celebrating carnival. The history of carnival can be viewed from different angles,

but one thing is sure: it is a result of a cross-cultural exchange that started centuries ago.

It is a common assumption that carnival traditions were brought to New World colonies by Europeans but that is only partly true. The inspiration flowed even stronger from another part of the world. Like in Europe, the festivities originated from religious events, celebrations of harvest or in honor of spirits and ancestors. Where European masks were often meant to hide a person’s identity, the African masks have another purpose: to represent and bring alive some kind of spirit. When looking at today’s street carnivals it is quite clear that ancient African traditions have had a very strong influence.

In many parts of the world that were former European colonies, African customs and religions entered through the slave trade. The lyrics of the samba presented by this year’s Champion Samba School **Beija Flor**, from the suburb of Nilopolis, clearly show the influence. The ancient traditions of parading and moving in circles through villages in costumes and masks are of African origin were believed to bring good fortune, to heal problems, and appease angry relatives that had died and passed on to the next world. The African tradition of putting together natural objects (bones, grass, beads, shells, fabric) to create a piece of sculpture, a mask, or costume represented a certain idea or spiritual force. Feathers were frequently used by Africans on masks and headdresses as a symbol of the ability of human beings to rise above problems, pains, heartbreak, and illness — to travel to another world to be reborn and to grow spiritually. Today, feathers are a chief source of inspiration for carnival costumes. African dance and music traditions transformed the early carnival celebrations in the Americas, as African drum rhythms, large puppets, stick fighters, and stilt dancers began to make their appearances in the carnival festivities.

More information:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/holydays/lent\\_2.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/holydays/lent_2.shtml)

**AS OUR FEASTING FILLS US WITH GRATITUDE  
SO MAY OUR FASTING AND ABSTINENCE  
HOLLOW OUT IN US A PLACE FOR DEEPER DESIRES  
AND AN ATTENTIVENESS TO HEAR THE CRY OF THE POOR.**

[www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Lent/mardigras.html](http://www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Lent/mardigras.html)

## ONCE MORE, LOVE

*by John J. Majka*

Love is a decision that becomes an attitude and a habit—  
a virtue extolled poetically and brandished practically  
by saints and sinners alike.

Love is confirmed by sacrifice, commitment and perseverance.  
Love is affirmed within relationships.  
Love is expressed in giving, sharing and receiving.

Love is confused with lust at times,  
lost in greed for power, pleasure, possessions.

Yet, without love we are not sure of our identity, our meaning.

We know what we love, even though we overuse the word:  
***I love Mom! Love those Colts!***

We never tire seeking love,  
analyzing love,  
declaring love,  
celebrating love.

In effect, we dedicate our entire lives to  
discovering love,  
nurturing love,  
embracing and cherishing love.

It is our existential calling: to the extent that we pursue and grasp love,  
we are alive and well.

The pursuit of happiness begins and ends with loving and being loved.

## VALENTINE'S DAY

*by Thiago Queiroz ('08)*



*Alejandra & Aidan 7<sup>th</sup> / 6<sup>th</sup>*

We all know that February 14<sup>th</sup> is Valentine's Day. Valentine's Day is a time in which we share our care towards our family members, friends, and co-workers. We give them things such as chocolate, flowers, cards to demonstrate our affection towards them. But how much more do we know about this important holiday, besides that it represents love?

**Valentine's Day** is a date full of mystery and legends. It was created and named after Saint Valentine, who has long been remembered for his heroic and romantic doings. The holiday itself has been influenced both by Christian and ancient Roman traditions. In 496, Pope Gelasius I declared that February 14<sup>th</sup> would be the day in which the feast of St. Valentine would be celebrated. Some say this date was chosen in an attempt to 'Christianize' celebrations of the pagan *Lupercalia* festival. In ancient Rome, February was the official beginning of spring and was considered to be a time for purification.

The date only began to be popularly celebrated during the seventeenth century, mainly in Great Britain. By the end of the eighteenth century, printed cards were already available, and were mailed mostly by women. It was not until the 1840's that Americans began to broadly celebrate this tradition. After reaching the United States, this holiday became more and more widespread, due especially due to marketing efforts. It has reached many countries such as China, Japan, Korea, and even the Jewish culture. Some countries have a different name for the holiday, but most celebrate it in a similar way, somewhat like happens here in Brazil with *Dia dos Namorados*, on June 12<sup>th</sup>.

Valentine's Day is the second holiday in which people most buy and send cards, reaching numbers of up to 1 billion worldwide. It is only behind Christmas, when over 2 and a half billion cards are sent. So during this month, let's remember to spread our vows of love and happiness to the ones we care about, symbolizing peace and companionship.

## OLM HAS TWO NEW TEACHERS !

by Natalie Kuhl and Marie Brown



Hello OLM faculty, students, and parents.

As **new student teachers** we would like to introduce ourselves. Our names are Natalie Kuhl and Marie Brown. Both of us attend **Bowling Green State University** (BGSU) in Bowling Green, Ohio, USA . At BGSU, Ms. Kuhl is pursuing her undergraduate degree in Integrated Language Arts. Therefore,

she will be working with John Majka in the high school English department. Ms. Brown is about to complete an undergraduate degree in Early Childhood Education. She will be working with Ms. Volkmann in one of the first grade classrooms.

There are various reasons why we both decided teaching at OLM would be the type of experience we wanted to partake in. One reason is that we are very eager to explore the many aspects and unique qualities that OLM has to offer. Also, we are both willing to submit ourselves to the different pedagogical styles we will have the opportunity to interact with at the school. Thus far our experience here in Rio de Janeiro has been nothing but pleasant and we hope that we can reciprocate this feeling in our working with everyone here at OLM.

### COMING EVENTS

**OLM Science Fair: March 2 and 3** Middle and High School students under the tutelage of their teachers promise an intriguing and engaging presentation of their skills and interests.

**Special *Campanha de Fraternidade* Week for the High School: March 27-30** Presented by the Senior class, involving an integration of the sciences, math, languages, social studies, music, art, and religion centered on the theme of the Amazon, protecting the environment and global warming

**International Festival and Talent Show: March 31.** These events have always been entertaining and often surprising displays of the many cultures and talents of the students and staff.

**Bullying:** an event for the Middle School led by the Guidance department with STUCO, sometime in March. Look for details soon.

## WHERE AM I?...AND WHAT AM I DOING HERE?

by Josh Rundle

Have you ever asked yourself these questions? On the eve of my son's first birthday I look around and marvel at how much has happened in my life over the past year. In the last 365 days I have become a father, lost a grandmother, completed a master's degree, changed jobs, and—oh yes—moved my family to a different continent! I recall how on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006 I was in the dead of winter and how my wife and I had to bundle up in sweaters and coats to face the sub-zero temperatures that greeted us as we left home to make our way to the hospital as she went into labor. How odd, then, it seems to me that I spent this February 27<sup>th</sup> battling the summer heat in classrooms with broken air conditioning while trying to convince 7<sup>th</sup> graders of the profound importance of sample spaces and the probabilities of random events.

And so I hope you can appreciate the fact that certain questions keep running through my mind, like *Where am I?...How did I get here?...and What am I doing here?* Is it possible that my coming to live in Rio de Janeiro was a random event? Perhaps some might say so. I never dreamed of doing so when I was younger. In fact, the idea of living outside of the United States had never even crossed my mind at all until I met my wife, who is Brazilian. Was that, too, just a random event?

Sometimes life can feel like just a series of random events. Our faith, however, tells us otherwise. As Christians, we believe that God has a unique plan for each of us and that He is constantly calling us, inviting us to follow that plan. Sounds great, right? There's just one problem...God doesn't always tell us the whole plan! He reveals only one step at a time. To make matters worse, sometimes we're afraid of just taking that one step, as God has a tendency of calling us to try things and do things that we think are beyond us. Our challenge, then, is to try to muster up enough faith and courage to follow God's call—even when we don't know exactly where we're going to end up—and trust that if we follow His lead, God will use our lives to make the world around us a better place.

So "*Where am I?*" Well, after seven months I think I've finally got that one figured out. As for "*What am I doing here?*" Well, to be honest, I'm still not really sure. What I am sure about, though, is that my being in Brazil, in Rio, and at OLM is not just a random event—it's part of God's plan—and for right now that's good enough for me.

### Editorial Board:

#### Teachers:

John Majka  
Kátia Souza  
Sandra Xavier

#### Students:

Maria F. Monsalve ('07)  
Samantha Guimarães ('07)  
Thiago Queiroz ('08)

**Photographer:** Mônica Tinoco

## THE MEANING OF LENT

Kátia Souza

Each year, the Lenten Season is set before us as a good opportunity to intensify personal prayer and penance to open our hearts to the docile welcoming of the Divine Will. During Lent, a spiritual journey is outlined for us that prepares us to relive the Great Mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Christ. This is done primarily by listening to the Word of God more devoutly and by practicing mortification by being ready to generously render greater assistance to those in need.

This special season is an excellent time not only for a reflection about our lives, our faith, self-improvement, our relationship with others, but also an inner pilgrimage toward holiness. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the center of the Christian faith and in order to celebrate this mystery in fullness a true preparation of the heart, of the mind and of the spirit is necessary.

During the Lenten Season in Brazil, the Catholic Church encourages us to reflect about an issue that is socially important and needs to be carefully considered as far as brotherhood and sisterhood is concerned. Let us all take this wonderful opportunity and go on a spiritual pilgrimage to an encounter with the one whose resurrection we will celebrate on Easter Sunday. If you are willing to participate in the contest for this Edition, here goes: Get a prize in the Religion Department by being the first to come with the correct answer to these questions:

1. Starting Lent, the Catholic Church launches a campaign connected to solidarity. What is its name? When is it launched?

2. What is the theme for this year's campaign? And the motto?

3. What is the objective of the campaign in Lent 2007?

4. How can you get involved in its theme?

### GLOBAL WARMING SAMBA - (based on *Explode Coração—Salgueiro 1993*)

It's time to realize

Global warming can't be sidelined.

It's a challenge for the ages

What to save, what to build to give us more time.

We need to start right now:

Stop polluting and abusing

No one is an island.

The end is near and to do naught won't be amusing.

Hear our earth cry out—

Howling deserts, burning forests.

Don't look to the sky for an answer

Only together can we change that final forecast.

It's up to us brothers and sisters.

We can't wait until tomorrow.

The bell has tolled for Paradise.

Wake up, do something to relieve the impending sorrow. (jjm)

## SUGGESTED SCIENCE WEBSITES AND BOOKS

Submitted by Gloria Santos

<http://youth.net/nsrc/nsrc-info.html>

The E-Journal of Student Research publishes abstracts of student research in grades K-12 on a quarterly basis. It's large collection of student scholarship is a wonderful resource for student researchers as they search for ideas, topics, and concepts to explore. The e-journal and other databases of student research are housed in the National Student Research Center's Electronic Library.

[http://www.sci-journal.org/index.php?c\\_check=1](http://www.sci-journal.org/index.php?c_check=1)

Sci-Journal is an on-line publication for science students. The journal, based in England, gives students the chance to publish work they have done in science class so that other science students can read about it.

<http://www.classzone.com>

Online extra resources for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades.

### *The Joy of Chemistry: The Amazing Science of Familiar Things*

by **Cathy Cobb** and **Monty L. Fetterolf**

*Prometheus Books, 2005*

Written by a prep school science teacher and a chemistry professor, this book is an enjoyable introduction to chemistry using examples from everyday life and experiments you can do at home to explain the principles of chemistry. From making a bottle rocket to the chemistry of pizza when it goes bad, the authors explain what happens. Want to know the definition of hard water? How a semiconductor works? What causes body odor?

The physics of the flush toilet? Why beans cause flatulence?

All this and more is presented in an entertaining manner that's relevant to our everyday lives.

(Cathy Cobb is also author of *Magic, Mayhem and Mavericks: The Spirited History of Physical Chemistry* and co-author of *Chemistry's Lively History from Alchemy to the Atomic Age*.)

### *Napoleon's Buttons: 17 Molecules that Changed History*

by **Penny Le Couteur** and **Jay Burreson**

*Penguin Group (USA) 2004*

This is a fascinating story of how certain desirable molecules shaped civilizations through trade and exploration and also stimulated technology through the search for substitutes. Among the molecules profiled are spices, glucose (sugar), silk and nylon, dyes (which led to the drug industry), the Pill, morphine, nicotine, caffeine, plastics and salt. Among the consequences of the search for these molecules was the colonization of much of the world by European nations and the establishment of slavery in the New World. The chemistry of the molecules is amply explained, but non-chemists can enjoy the book as well without delving into the equations. The title refers to a claim that the uniforms worn by Napoleon's soldiers had buttons made of tin, which becomes brittle and crumbles in very cold temperatures. During Napoleon's disastrous retreat from Moscow in the dead of winter, so the story goes, the soldiers' buttons crumbled, leaving them even more susceptible to the cold. The authors can't verify the story—"tin disease" was well known at the time and it seems unlikely that a major army would make such a mistake—but it illustrates how important a common chemical can be.