



## **3<sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY of EASTER** **YEAR C – May 5, 2019**

The scripture readings today remind us of the awesome truth that God so loved the world that he gave us his own son. That fact alone could be the subject of a whole week's spiritual retreat. All week long, at daily Mass, we have been hearing the testimony from witnesses who saw Jesus alive after he rose from the dead. He talked with them and ate with them and opened the scriptures so that they could understand all the events that happened during those first days after the resurrection.

The first reading from the Acts of the Apostles reminds us that the apostles had to pay a heavy price for their witness to Jesus. Their witness to Jesus never wavered and eventually it cost them their lives.

In the second reading, St. John reminds us with apocalyptic language that Jesus was the sacrificial lamb who took away the sins of the world and it is because of him that we can have new life and we can have it even here on earth. In the mind of Jesus, we are worth redeeming. That too, could be the subject of a weeklong retreat.

The gospel takes us to the third appearance of Jesus after he rose from the dead. It is at this appearance that Jesus asks that famous question of St. Peter. Do you love me. Jesus asks that same question of each one of us...It's like saying to us, are you ready to be my disciple. If we say yes, he may not ask us to die for our faith, but he does ask us to live it.

50 Years ago, when I was in charge of youth ministry in Schuylkill County, there was an inspired piece of writing that was called to my attention by one of the kids. It's called "Don't be fooled by me" I posted that message on our website on Palm Sunday. The substance of the message is as follows:

*"Don't be fooled by me. Don't be fooled by the mask I wear. I wear a thousand masks - and none of them is me. Pretending is an art that's second nature to me, but don't be fooled. I give the impression that I am secure, that I fit in. But underneath dwells the real me in confusion, in fear, in loneliness. But I hide that. I don't want anyone to know. I panic at the thought of my weakness being exposed. That's why I wear a mask.*

*I am told that love is stronger than the strongest walls, and in this lies my hope. Who am I? I am every man, and every woman, and every child, I am you."*

Lots of food for thought here. For a few moments in silence, reflect on the masks you wear and why you wear them.

