

A Letter from the Governing Board of Pastors

Father McCreedy, Saint Paul Parish

Dear Holy Rosary Family,

During this glorious season of Easter, our holy inclination should be to reflect on that joyful day Christ rose from the dead. There's much more to reflect upon than the most obvious "Christ Is Risen." Our faith doesn't only revolve around what happened on Easter morning. That day of the Lord's Resurrection had an afternoon and evening to it. The whole day was sanctified by actions of the Risen Lord. And His actions that Sunday have set in motion the Church's response to the Resurrection.

On the afternoon of his Resurrection, Christ appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). This is a monumental moment in the unfolding of Christianity. Not recognizing Him and dismayed that their hopes in Jesus of Nazareth had been dashed on Friday, Jesus quotes the Scriptures and explains them. After this, the disciples invite Him to stay and dine with them. He does; and, upon "breaking bread with them," He repeats what He said at the Last Supper. In other words, He gives them His Body and Blood. Immediately they recognize Him in what had been the bread and wine. Although He then disappears, their hearts are filled with joy because they sense Him even more present to them, "within" themselves, than they did when he was sitting across from them at the table. They run back to the upper room where the Apostles were gathered and proclaim the Good News. Does any of this sound familiar?

What Christ was actually doing was celebrating what we have come to know as "the Mass." Note how He proclaims the Scriptures (our readings at Mass), and then explains (the homily), after which the disciples invite to stay with them (our presentation of the bread and wine, during which we bring forth what is necessary for Him "to stay with us"). Then follows the narrative of Last Supper and the reception of the Lord's Body and Blood. This whole scenario concludes with the disciples leaving in joy to proclaim their experience of the Risen Lord (our final blessing and sending-forth). On that Easter Sunday, Our Lord repeated the Last Supper, with the heightened enlightenment that His precious Body and Blood was the communication of an intimate share in His resurrection. Stop and think! Jesus Himself celebrated His own day of resurrection with the Mass! Should we wonder how special and necessary the Mass is in our lives? By his actions, our Savior Himself is telling us how we are to commemorate the mysteries of His life-giving death and resurrection. The Mass is an essential element of true Christianity. But the wonders of that first Easter didn't end with the "Road to Emmaus." There's more.

That Easter evening, Christ appears to the Apostles gathered still in that upper room. The first words of their Lord were "Peace be with You... whose sins you shall forgive are forgiven them..." (John 20:19-23). What Jesus was saying is something unbelievably loving. He is literally saying He knows his people will diminish or even destroy the benefits of His redemptive death and resurrection by sinning again (even after all His suffering and death for them). But He loves us so much that He initiates a way for us to recapture this essential share in His redemptive death and resurrection. He establishes what we now know as the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is the ultimate expression of His desire not to lose any of those for whom He willingly suffered, died, and rose again. This sacrament is the tender and powerful expression of His love and patience for us, as unworthy as we might be. It is proof that He'll never give up on us. Lovingly and constantly, He offers us re-intimacy with the graces of His redemptive death and resurrection. "Going to confession, as we refer it, is truly and deeply an Easter sacrament. Gloriously, let us revel in our blessed experiences of Easter morning, noon, and evening all year long: Our holy Mass, our Eucharist, and our Sacrament of Reconciliation. These constitute us being an Easter people. Alleluia!

Blessings to all!

Father McCreedy