

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

From the Pastor's Desk

During the weeks ahead we will be reading through the Acts of the Apostles during the daily masses and in part on Sundays of the Easter Season. All of Salvation History leads up to Jesus Christ. From Christ it heads on into the future through the witness of his Apostles and Disciples. The Acts of the Apostles is the New Testament book that tells the story of the activities of the Apostles in the early days of the Church. The most notable characters we encounter are Sts. Peter and Paul.

As we read from the Acts of the Apostles about the early days of the Church, we come across curious details that could be easily overlooked. We read that the early Christian Community, the Church, "... devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers." What is interesting at this point in history the Scriptures that we call the New Testament did not exist. The only Scriptures that did exist at the time were the Hebrew Scriptures: The Old Testament. What did exist at the time were the "teaching of the apostles, communal living, breaking of the bread and prayers". In more cases than not, when people are asked the question... "Which came first, the Church or the New Testament?" With a curious look prompted by this question, they usually answer that the Scriptures came first. However, the answer is that the Church existed before the New Testament. The community of believers, the Church, existed before the New Testament was written. The Church existed under the witness and the teaching authority of the eyewitnesses: The Apostles. The New Testament was written and formally recognized later. We can literally say that the New Testament: The Gospels, Acts of the Apostles and the Letters were written by the Church. This is an important point. Here we see the Christian Community living the faith under the witness and the teaching authority of the Apostles and their successors. It can be understood that the faith is rooted and spread through the witness of the Apostles. There is a priority placed on the testimony of the eyewitnesses.

An interesting teaching flows from this. In the Church we believe that there are two authorities: The Sacred Tradition and the Sacred Scriptures. Together we refer to the Sacred Tradition and the Sacred Scriptures as the *Deposit of Faith*. You may have heard other Christian denominations proclaim *Sola Scriptura*; "Scripture Alone" is the ultimate authority. This would be true if the Scriptures preceded the Church. This is simply not the case. In the Acts of the Apostles we see the teaching Tradition and Sacred Scripture as the Sacred Authority.

We also notice in the Acts of the Apostles that... "Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to the breaking bread in their homes." In other words, the early Christians were still connected to the prayers and worship of the Temple/Jewish faith. There remained a deep connection to Temple Worship which consisted of reading from the Scriptures (the Law, Prophets, and the praying of the Psalms) with instructions and teachings. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that the Apostles were often in the Temple instructing and teaching about Jesus Christ. This was their communal worship. The animal sacrifices at the Temple eventually came to an end. The new element added by the Christians was the Liturgy of the Eucharist: the "Breaking of the Bread". For the Christians this replaced the Temple sacrifices. From the Temple the small Christian Community withdrew to smaller gatherings, usually in their homes, for the "Breaking of the Bread". Eventually these two elements were joined and celebrated at various gathering places when the Temple was destroyed around 70 A.D. This formal prayer, which we call the Mass, slowly developed out of

this Temple worship taking on a new Christian form.

Even though this is a very simple outline it is important to note that our Sacred Liturgy has these deep roots. The new element of the "breaking of the bread" took place in the homes of believers because it was not something that could be done in the Temple since it was a distinctively Christian rite. Then when the persecution of the Church started these gatherings happened in hiding: in homes and the catacombs. They persisted in their gathering because this was something that Jesus told his disciple to do *in memory of him*. So, the followers of Jesus did exactly that. These gatherings, which became risky, were necessary in sustaining the young Christian Community. Again, this liturgy is something that will see further development as the Church will also see growth in the future.

The important point to be made here is the centrality of the Eucharistic Liturgy in the lives of the early Christians. It was essential to gather for communal prayer, the reading of Scripture, instruction from the Apostles and the "Breaking of the Bread." It was because of this persistence in gathering that the Church survived.

Considered from a worldly perspective, the Church as a mere social institution should not have survived shortly after Jesus. Throughout history we have seen the rise and disappearance of many religious movements, human institutions and empires. Many of which started with great strength, wealth and organization which eventually disappeared. However, there is Christianity which started with a single individual who was executed. This individual was also a descendent of a small insignificant nation: the Jewish people. He had twelve Apostles (of which one was a betrayer) who proclaimed that he was raised from the dead. It should have all ended there! However, these followers were willing to sacrifice everything, even their lives for Jesus and his teaching. Many did exactly that! Since then the history of Christianity has literally seen billions of followers. Christianity is alive and continues to grow. Christianity cannot be destroyed. Why? The Church is the Body of Christ. As the Body of Christ, the church continues to gather for prayer, the reading of the Word of God, the instruction of the Apostles and their successors and most especially the "Breaking of the Bread". The enduring presence of the Lord in Word and Sacrament has made it possible for the Church to survive and grow against all worldly odds. The Church and her Sacraments are the *abiding and sustaining presence of Christ* in the world. He is the Resurrected Lord who dies no more and continues to be present today! He Lives!

Worldly speaking it just doesn't make sense that this community of believers should have survived after Jesus. The history of the Church is filled with accounts of persecution, opposition and human failures. It is also a history filled with wonderful accomplishments and charitable works for the good of humanity. Although we have our sinners, we also have our saints. The Church has survived because the Church is the Body of Christ: The Resurrected Glorified Christ. Christ is present to the world in and through His Church. Christ is present in our lives in the Church. Christ is present in the Sacred Scriptures and the Sacraments, most especially in the Eucharist. As Catholics we would be negligent not to take advantage of and be receptive to this source of strength, inspiration and the promise of Eternal Life.

We are living in difficult times. There are forces rising against the Christian Community: The Church. The faithful practice of the faith has taken a serious hit over the last year with all the lockdowns and continues to diminish which makes these

EASTER FLOWERS

In addition to the those listed in the bulletin we remember the following:
Irene & Richard Dillon, Shirley Knox, Margaret & Lawrence Dillon and Theresa & Hillary Sailing from Mr. & Mrs. Loren Bates
Rita Petho and Eileen Gaab from Jim Petho
Ray & Marie Weber and Georganna Bauer from Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Weber



times more difficult. We had a great crowd for the Easter Sunday Masses. It was incredibly edifying, and I hope it continues. Yet sadly many people do not see the necessity of the Church. When it comes to Catholics many do not see the need to “*devote themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to the breaking bread...*” The gathering in the times of the early church is what we call “The Mass” today. It was the strength of the early Church in her infancy. The Mass was the source of strength for the Church throughout her history. The Mass remains the source of strength for the Church today. The Mass is the source of strength for our lives as followers of Jesus Christ.

Have a great Easter Season.
 Father Ralko

This week we pray Week IV of the Liturgy of the hours.

Church Support

April 4, 2021	
OFFERTORY	\$18,481.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$14,592.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	<u>\$(890.00)</u>
Other Income	<u>\$1,855.00</u>
Weekly surplus	\$7,732.00

May God bless you for supporting your parish!

Youth Ministry News!

Catalyst Nights – Students grades 7-12 are invited to a Catalyst Night at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in the activity center on Sunday, April 25th at 6:00 p.m. The evening is led by the National Evangelization Team (NET), college age missionaries. The night includes dinner, presentations, games, skits, prayer, friends and fun. This is a joint, St. Thomas and St. Nicholas youth event and all teens grades 7-12 regardless of affiliation are invited. Parents are welcome!

THE GRIEF RECOVERY METHOD – GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP scheduled to begin Tuesday, April 13th has been cancelled. If you would like to meet with someone individually, please call the parish office.

WE NEED YOUR HELP FINDING OUR PEOPLE. There are rumors that the nursing homes will soon be open for visits and we hope to resume homebound visits soon. It has come to our attention that many people have moved in the past year. Please help us update our nursing home and homebound lists by notifying the parish office with the name and location of those who are either homebound or in nursing homes. We don’t want to miss anyone! (740) 453-0597, ext. 14.

Real Presence, Real Future reflections: He Is Risen! Deacon. Tom Berg, Jr., St. Andrew Parish

“Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed.” With these joyous words from the Gospel on this Easter Sunday, we celebrate our Lord’s resurrection, his victory over death and sin, rejoicing in his Real Presence in our lives. This is the pinnacle of our Catholic life of faith, what drives and inspires us every day to walk ever closer with our loving Lord as we journey toward the Real Future of God’s promise of salvation for those who put their trust and faith in Him.

To read more about how we are growing together in the life of faith and discipleship in the Diocese of Columbus, visit www.RealPresenceRealFuture.org

Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA) is a Twelve Step, Twelve Tradition program for men and women who experienced the trauma of being raised in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional home. It is a safe place to learn how alcoholism and other family dysfunction affected the past, how it influences the present, and how to heal the wounds for a better future. Meetings are held in the Saint Nicholas Church Social Hall (Church Basement). **MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THURSDAYS at 7:00 p.m.** Please use the Silliman Street door. Meetings are expected to last no more than one hour, and masks are required. Contact James Sullivan for more Information at (740) 670 –2959.

BOOKS, NEWSPAPERS AND PRAYER CARDS! Looking for a good read? A variety of good books are available in the vestibule (back of the church), including children’s books. The suggested donation is \$2.00 per book and proceeds are used to purchase additional books. Free copies of the “National Catholic Register”, a Catholic newspaper that covers today’s hot topics, are available on the front pews in the church and in the vestibule. Also, prayer cards and pamphlets on a variety of topics are available in the vestibule. These are also free. Take some for yourself and take some to share!

The Month of May in honor of Mary our Mother, we will pray the Rosary before the weekend Masses. Those interested in leading the Rosary before the 5:15 p.m. Saturday Mass or the Sunday 8:15 a.m. or 10:45 a.m. Mass should contact the parish office.

Booster Mania Winners for March

\$25.00- Bill Durant, Dave Pfeifer, Renee Dutro and Fritz Weidig

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

The Book of Intentions - Praying for each other's intentions is an essential part of parish life. The Book of Intentions can be found in the vestibule (back of the church between the doors, under the statue of "Our Lady of Fatima"). If you would like the parish to pray for your intentions, please write the intention in a sentence or two in the book. The intentions will not be read aloud, but will be referenced during the "Prayer of the Faithful" at each Mass.

FREE PRAYER BOOK! Free copies of "The Word Among Us" can be found on the front pews of the church and in the vestibule. "The Word Among Us" contains all the daily and weekend readings for Mass, daily meditations and interesting articles on a variety of subjects. Pick up your copy today!

ELECTRONIC CONTRIBUTIONS

St. Nicholas Church has a convenient way to make your regular offerings. With our electronic giving program, you can easily set up a recurring giving schedule. If you are currently giving on a weekly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 checks a year or prepare 52 envelopes. Even when something prevents you from attending services, our church will continue to receive your contributions on an uninterrupted basis. To become an electronic giver, call or visit the church office or our website: stnickparish.org.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with those serving our country currently and with their loved ones at home. We pray for a safe homecoming and that the world may one day be at peace.

PLEASE REMEMBER ST. NICHOLAS PARISH IN YOUR WILL. CALL THE PARISH OFFICE AT 453-0597 FOR MORE DETAILS.

Please join us each Monday at the St. Nicholas Parish Office Chapel at 2:00 p.m. as we gather to pray the Rosary asking Our Lady's Intercession or the many needs of our nation, community, and parish.

INCOME TAX

If you would like to have a record of your donations to the Church for tax purposes, please fill in your envelope number, name and address or email and place it in the collection basket. A statement will be sent to you.

Envelope No. _____

Name _____

Address _____ or

Email address _____

What's Happening in Our Parish

MONDAY, April 12

8:00 a.m., Mass: Howard Miller, Church

2:00 p.m., Rosary: Parish Office

7:00 p.m., Mercy Bible Study, Parish Office

TUESDAY, April 13, St. Martin I

9:00 a.m., Mass: St. Thomas Intention, Church

WEDNESDAY, April 14

9:00 a.m., School Mass: Mary Hall, birthday, Church

THURSDAY, April 15

8:00 a.m., Mass: St. Thomas Intention, Church

7:00 p.m., Adult Children of Alcoholics Meeting, Church Basement

FRIDAY, April 16

8:00 a.m., Mass: Jeff Armbrust, anniversary, Church

3rd Sunday of Easter

SATURDAY, April 17

4:15 p.m. p.m.-4:45 p.m., Confessions, Church

5:15 p.m., Mass: Edwin Staley, Church

SUNDAY, April 18

8:15 a.m., Mass: St. Nicholas Parishioners, Church

9:15 a.m., Sunday School, Parish Office

10:45 a.m., Mass: Cathy Burkhart, birthday, Church

Readings for Week of April 12

Mon.	Acts 4:23-31	Jn 3:1-8
Tues.	Acts 4:32-37	Jn 3:7b-15
Wed	Acts 5:17-26	Jn 3:16-21
Thurs.	Acts 5:27-33	Jn 3:31-36
Fri.	Acts 5:34-42	Jn 6:1-15
Sat.	Acts 6:1-7	Jn 6:16-21
Sun	Acts 3:13-15, 17-19	Lk 24:35-48

Cantor Schedule

April 17 5:15 p.m. Kevin McCarthy
April 18 8:15 a.m. Janet Moses
10:45 a.m. Sr. Bernadette