

April 2021

Spiritual Catalyst

“The truth is like a lion. You do not have to defend it. Let it loose. It will defend itself.” – St. Augustine



Welcome to the April 2021 edition of the Spiritual Catalyst. I hope and pray that this Easter season will be a time in which we all grow closer to the Lord. For more reflections and information please check out www.mayjesuschristbepraised.com.

Thank you and God bless
Fr. Tom Pastorius

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD



All the troubles of the Church, all the evils in the world, flow from this source: that men do not by clear and sound knowledge and serious consideration penetrate into the truths of Sacred Scripture.

- Teresa of Avila

April 4, 2021

Easter Sunday The Resurrection of the Lord

The Mass of Easter Day

Lectionary: 42

Gospel Jn 20:1-9

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, “They

have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they put him.” So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb

first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.



Reflection: The bible holds out the great and glorious hope of a resurrection for us all. But what will the resurrected body be like. Saints and theologians offer the helpful illustration of the butterfly. As the caterpillar is to the butterfly, so our present body is to the resurrected body. There is continuity but there is also difference. Just as the caterpillar's body is suited to the realm of the ground, and the butterfly's body to flight through the air, so our present bodies may be suited to this world of sin, but our resurrected bodies will be suited to the life of the Spirit, in a world that is eternal and without limit. And just as it would be difficult for even an intelligent caterpillar to imagine what life would be like as a butterfly, so we struggle to imagine the resurrected life. Finally, it may be helpful to remember that when we think of the caterpillar, we think of its life in terms of it becoming a butterfly. We define its present existence by its future. So too, our present existence is defined by the future God has for us.

Spiritual Questions:

1. How does the image of a caterpillar becoming a butterfly speak to us of the Resurrection?
2. What other images would you use to describe the resurrection to others?
3. Why was the burial cloth for the head in a different place?
4. Why does Mary Magdala go to the tomb? How can showing respect for God and others lead to discovering the Resurrection?
5. How could Peter see and believe but still not understand the Scriptures?

April 11, 2021

**Second Sunday of Easter
Sunday of Divine Mercy
Lectionary: 44**

Gospel Jn 20:19-31

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this,

he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." Now a week later his disciples were again inside, and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.



Spiritual Reflection:

A member of a certain church, who previously had been attending services regularly, stopped going. After a few weeks, the pastor decided to visit him. It was a chilly evening. The pastor found the man at home alone, sitting before a blazing fire.

Guessing the reason for his pastor's visit, the man welcomed him, led him to a big chair near the fireplace and waited. The pastor made himself comfortable but said nothing. In the grave silence, he contemplated the play of the flames around the burning logs.

After some minutes, the pastor took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth all alone. Then he sat back in his chair, still silent. The host watched all this in quiet fascination.

As the one lone ember's flame diminished, there was a momentary glow and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and "dead as a doornail."

Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting.

Just before the pastor was ready to leave, he picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it.

As the pastor reached the door to leave, his host said, "Thank you so much for your visit and especially for the fiery sermon. I shall be back in church next Sunday."

Thomas almost missed out on the Resurrection because he had isolated himself from the community.

Spiritual Questions:

1. Why is being part of a Christian Community important?
2. How can you strengthen your ties with your parish?
3. How can you strengthen your ties with others in your area?
4. How does your being present at Sunday service help others?
5. Who can you invite back to Church?

April 18, 2021

Third Sunday of Easter

Lectionary: 47

Gospel Lk 24:35-48

The two disciples recounted what had taken place on the way, and how Jesus was made known to them in the breaking of bread. While they were still speaking about this, he stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." But they were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost. Then he said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do questions arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see, I have." And as he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While they were still incredulous for joy and were amazed, he asked them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of baked fish; he took it and ate it in front of them.

He said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. And he said to them, "Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."

Spiritual Reflection:

We see the beginning of Eucharistic Life: according to Fr. Ronald Rolheiser:

"Eucharist, then, is meant not just to celebrate our joys and gratitude, but also to break us open, to make us grown in anguish, to lay bare our mistrust, to lessen our jealousies and break down the distance that separates us. What the Eucharist asks of us in vulnerability, humility, contrition, and forgiveness. Bitterness, hatred, and suspicion are meant to disappear at a Eucharist."

Spiritual Questions:

1. Why is important to see (contemplate) Jesus' wounds?
2. Why does Jesus ask for food to eat?
3. What do they offer him? Why is what they have enough?
4. Why did the Christ have to suffer?
5. What are you a witness too?

April 25, 2021

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Lectionary: 50

Gospel Jn 10:11-18

Jesus said: "I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them. This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd. This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father."

Spiritual Reflection:

Today's Gospel speaks to us about the amazing truth of the Scripture. The fact that the Scriptures are meant for everyone and at the same time they were written especially for each of us as an individual. God's voice of love helps us not only as a Church but when prayed correctly helps us discover God's will for our own individual lives. Sometimes in praying the Scripture it is important to see what is not said. For

example, our Shepherd's voice has none of what counselors call the Seven Toxic Behaviors that we as human beings sometimes use. God therefore encourages us to avoid being 1. Avoid Envious 2. Avoid Overly Sensitive 3. Avoid seeing yourself as a Victim 4. Avoid Negative Thinking 5. Avoid Lack of Self-Control 6. Avoid Superficial 7. Avoid being Cruelty. May our actions and words come to echo the voice of love that is the voice of the Good Shepherd and may we realize that any voice we hear that has one of the seven toxic behaviors in it is not from the Lord.

Spiritual Questions:

1. How well are you with hearing the Shepherd's voice?
2. What are you doing to improve your spiritual hearing?
3. What words or phrases do you know are not from God?
4. How can you be the voice of God in other's lives?
5. Are you grateful for the Shepherd's care.

Spiritual Ponderings



" The truth is like a lion. You do not have to defend it. Let it loose and it will defend itself." – St. Augustine

The following is an Archive of my Spiritual Ponderings Columns from the month of January. To see my Current Spiritual Ponderings please check out St. Joseph Parish Bulletin.

**Fr. Thomas M. Pastorius
March 7, 2021
Spiritual Ponderings
With A Father's Heart**

Pope Francis announced last December that the Church will celebrate a Holy Year in honor of St. Joseph. As part of his announcement, he wrote a letter to the Church that shares some of his thoughts on St. Joseph and the spiritual insights that he has gained from reflecting on the life of St. Joseph. His letter was titled "With a Father's Heart." I would like to share with you some of my thoughts on Pope Francis' thoughts on St. Joseph. Pope Francis's words will be in bold and my reflections will be in the normal font.

One last note before I begin my reflections, on this page you will find a text box with a prayer to St. Joseph that Pope Francis wrote. I encourage all of us to pray this prayer everyday especially during this month of March.

Joseph had the courage to become the legal father of Jesus, to whom he gave the name revealed by the angel: "You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). As we know, for ancient peoples, to give a name to a person or to a thing, as Adam did in the account in the Book of Genesis (cf. 2:19-20), was to establish a relationship.

Pope Francis used the word "courage" to describe Joseph's choice to say "yes" to becoming the foster father of Jesus. Reflecting on this, I have to agree that there were many reasons for Joseph to be afraid of what God was asking of him. First Joseph knowing that he was part of King David's line and the idea that the messiah would be a political king, Joseph could possibly be making himself an enemy of the Roman Empire. He was a carpenter not a soldier. He had to trust that God would not put him in a position he could not handle. Second was Jesus being the Son of God would be God's most prize treasure. What if he screwed up? Would God smite him? He had to trust that God would be merciful and understanding of his human weakness.

***Pope Francis's
Prayer to St. Joseph***
Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To you God entrusted his only Son; in you Mary placed her trust; with you Christ became man. Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen.

Ultimately Joseph did trust in God's love and mercy and said "yes," despite not having God's full plan laid out in front of him.

To protect Jesus from Herod, Joseph dwelt as a foreigner in Egypt (cf. Mt 2:13-18). After returning to his own country, he led a hidden life in the tiny and

obscure village of Nazareth in Galilee, far from Bethlehem, his ancestral town, and from Jerusalem and the Temple. Of Nazareth it was said, “No prophet is to rise” (cf. *Jn 7:52*) and indeed, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (cf. *Jn 1:46*).

I had never thought that Joseph chose Nazareth to live in because it would be the least likely place for anyone to come looking for Jesus. Joseph placed his family’s safety as his number one priority even if this made him a “nobody” also. Joseph’s life challenges us to make sure that we put people especially our family first.

I would like to share some personal reflections on this extraordinary figure, so close to our own human experience. For, as Jesus says, “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (*Mt 12:34*). My desire to do so increased during these months of pandemic, when we experienced, amid the crisis, how “our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people, people often overlooked. People who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines, or on the latest television show, yet in these very days are surely shaping the decisive events of our history. Doctors, nurses, storekeepers and supermarket workers, cleaning personnel, caregivers, transport workers, men and women working to provide essential services and public safety, volunteers, priests, men and women religious, and so very many others. They understood that no one is saved alone... How many people daily exercise patience and offer hope, taking care to spread not panic, but shared responsibility. How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday ways, how to accept and deal with a crisis by adjusting their routines, looking ahead and encouraging the practice of prayer. How many are praying, making sacrifices and interceding for the good of all”. Each of us can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble. Saint Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. A word of recognition and of gratitude is due to them all.

I do not think I could say the above insights any better than Pope Francis did and so therefore instead of commenting on the above quote I am going to challenge you to reflect on the people in your life who are like St. Joseph, who appear hidden or in the shadows, but who have had a great positive impact on our life. Take the time to thank those people for the little ways they have shown you God’s love.

Fr. Thomas M. Pastorius
March 14, 2021
Spiritual Ponderings
With A Father’s Heart

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1. A beloved father

The greatness of Saint Joseph is that he was the spouse of Mary and the father of Jesus. In this way, he placed himself, in the words of Saint John Chrysostom, “at the service of the entire plan of salvation”.

A few years ago, we had a very heavy down pour and unfortunately the storm drain outside the parish center doors were clogged up with leaves and trash. This debris prevented the water from flowing down the drain and away from the building. Instead, it began to back up and seep into the parish gym through the Parish Center doors. We were lucky that our maintenance man discovered the problem and soaked up the water before any damage happened to the wood floor.

God’s grace is pouring into us all the time, those who say “yes” to God are most opened (unclogged) to receive His love. Those who are filled with sin and are spiritual clogged allow God’s grace to go elsewhere. St. Joseph’s willingness to say “yes” to God shows that he was not clogged with sin (pride, envy, wrath, greed, sloth, gluttony, and lust). If we want to be able to say “yes” to God like St. Joseph did we need to get rid of the sin in our life.

Joseph also knew his greatest treasure in life was his family. He would not be like Peter who would deny Jesus out of fear or like Judas and betray Jesus for money. He knew his family was his greatest treasure and thus was going to do all he could to keep them safe. Fame, fortune, wealth, meant nothing to him. If they came to him great. If they did not come great. Family was what mattered.

Saint Paul VI pointed out that Joseph concretely expressed his fatherhood “by making his life a sacrificial service to the mystery of the incarnation and its redemptive purpose. He employed his legal authority over the Holy Family to devote himself completely to them in his life and work. He turned his human vocation to domestic love into a superhuman oblation of himself, his heart and all his abilities, a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home”.

Pope John Paul II beautifully defined love as wanting what is best for another person even if it requires a sacrifice on our part. The opposite of love according to John Paul II was not hate but rather objectification – when we use another person to make us happy even if it hurts them. The scripture tells us very little about Joseph but it does tell us that he was a man who made many sacrifices for his family. He sacrificed his idea of what his future would like. He sacrificed his idea of what married life would be. He sacrificed his carpentry business on a number occasions and he went so far to sacrifice in a major way when he lived in Egypt for a number of years in order to protect Jesus.

As a descendant of David (cf. Mt 1:16-20), from whose stock Jesus was to spring according to the promise made to David by the prophet Nathan (cf. 2 Sam 7), and as the spouse of Mary of Nazareth, Saint Joseph stands at the crossroads between the Old and New Testaments.

St. Joseph had to be a man of faith in order to say “yes” to God and the best way he could be a man of faith was to know the Scriptures of the Old Testament to the best of his ability. He also had to take on the primary role of bringing Jesus up in the Jewish faith and we see in the Gospels that Jesus knew His Jewish Scripture well.

**Fr. Thomas M. Pastorius
March 21, 2021
Spiritual Ponderings
With A Father’s Heart**

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2. A tender and loving father

Joseph saw Jesus grow daily “in wisdom and in years and in divine and human favor” (Lk 2:52). As the Lord had done with Israel, so Joseph did with Jesus: he taught him to walk, taking him by the hand; he was for him like a father who raises an infant to his cheeks, bending down to him and feeding him (cf. Hos 11:3-4). Joseph and Mary did not simply entrust Jesus’ education to the local rabbi. They took their role of being Jesus primary educators in the faith seriously. All parents are challenged by St. Joseph and the Church to be active in their children’s faith formation. Parents should take time to pray with their children and to learn more about the faith together.

In Joseph, Jesus saw the tender love of God: “As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him” (Ps 103:13).

I am pretty confident that if St. Joseph would have been a lousy dad, Jesus would never have encouraged us to call God “Our Father.” As Jesus saw in ordinary day objects and activities like farming, building, and fishing ways to speak about the kingdom of God, He must have saw something in St. Joseph that would make him encourage people to refer to the Father as the Father. When people look at us, do we remind them of a loving God?

The history of salvation is worked out “in hope against hope” (Rom 4:18), through our weaknesses. All too often, we think that God works only through our better parts, yet most of his plans are realized in and despite our frailty. Thus, Saint Paul could say: “To keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me: ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness’” (2 Cor 12:7-9).

Since this is part of the entire economy of salvation, we must learn to look upon our weaknesses with tender mercy.

I wonder if Joseph ever thought that Zechariah (the father of John the Baptist) should have been in his place. Zechariah was of the high priestly clan. Perhaps that is exactly why God chose Joseph instead because Joseph’s humility allowed him to say and Zechariah’s while looking more the correct choice on the outside was too prideful on the inside. He after all doubted the angel’s message when he saw him face to face and Joseph accepted courageously after on seeing the angel in a dream.

The evil one makes us see and condemn our frailty, whereas the Spirit brings it to light with tender love. Tenderness is the best way to touch the frailty within us. Pointing fingers and judging others are frequently signs of an inability to accept our own weaknesses, our own frailty. Only tender love will save us from the snares of the accuser (cf. *Rev 12:10*). That is why it is so important to encounter God's mercy, especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, where we experience his truth and tenderness. Paradoxically, the evil one can also speak the truth to us, yet he does so only to condemn us. We know that God's truth does not condemn, but instead welcomes, embraces, sustains and forgives us. That truth always presents itself to us like the merciful father in Jesus' parable (cf. *Lk 15:11-32*). It comes out to meet us, restores our dignity, sets us back on our feet and rejoices for us, for, as the father says: "This my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (v. 24).

Even through Joseph's fears, God's will, his history and his plan were at work. Joseph, then, teaches us that faith in God includes believing that he can work even through our fears, our frailties and our weaknesses. He also teaches us that amid the tempests of life, we must never be afraid to let the Lord steer our course. At times, we want to be in complete control, yet God always sees the bigger picture.

Although it is unwritten, I am sure that Mary had a big role to play in building up St. Joseph during every moment of their life together.

Fr. Thomas M. Pastorius
March 28, 2021
Spiritual Ponderings
With A Father's Heart

Pope Francis announced last December that the Church will celebrate a Holy Year in honor of St. Joseph. As part of his announcement, he wrote a letter to the Church that shares some of his thoughts on St. Joseph and the spiritual insights that he has gained from reflecting on the life of St. Joseph. His letter was titled "With a Father's Heart." I would like to share with you some of my thoughts on Pope Francis' thoughts on St. Joseph. Pope Francis's words will be in bold and my reflections will be in the normal font.

3. An obedient father

As he had done with Mary, God revealed his saving plan to Joseph. He did so by using dreams, which in the

Bible and among all ancient peoples, were considered a way for him to make his will known.

One of my favorite prayers is "God give me the wisdom to know your will and the courage and strength to do it." It is one thing to know God's will is another to do it. Scott Hahn and Bishop Barron both talk about the words "Lord is be with you" as being the scariest words in the Bible because God always seems to assure those of His divine assistance right before He asks them to do something major. St. Joseph must have wondered what it meant to be the foster father of the Son of God would entail. He does not question though but falls back upon his faith that has taught him that God's will is always the best way forward.

In the first dream, an angel helps him resolve his grave dilemma: "Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (*Mt 1:20-21*). Joseph's response was immediate: "When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him" (*Mt 1:24*). Obedience made it possible for him to surmount his difficulties and spare Mary.

I assume St. Joseph spent a lot of time trying to discover what God wanted him to do with the Blessed Virgin Mary after she came to him pregnant with a child that was not his. He probably used all his best discernment tools to come up with the decision to divorce her quietly. When he discovers God's will for him is to do the opposite, he does not hesitate. He does not claim to know God's will better than God. Sometimes though I can think I know the right way to handle the situation only to discover God wants me to do a different way. If I am smart, I will follow St. Joseph's example and do it God's way and not my own.

In the second dream, the angel tells Joseph: "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him" (*Mt 2:13*). Joseph did not hesitate to obey, regardless of the hardship involved: "He got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod" (*Mt 2:14-15*).

At the very moment that things were looking up for St. Joseph and the Holy Family they are forced to leave everything and flee to Egypt. The magi brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. One theologian suggested that Joseph had to use these gifts in order to finance their trip to Egypt. Easy come, Easy go, blessed be the name of the Lord. Joseph uses material things

not for his own good but rather in a spirit of detachment he uses what God has given at this moment to fulfil his vocation of husband and foster father.

In Egypt, Joseph awaited with patient trust the angel's notice that he could safely return home. In a third dream, the angel told him that those who sought to kill the child were dead and ordered him to rise, take the child and his mother, and return to the land of Israel (cf. Mt 2:19-20). Once again, Joseph promptly obeyed. "He got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel" (Mt 2:21).

Archbishop Fulton Sheen reminds us: "Patience is power. Patience is not an absence of action; rather it is "timing" it waits on the right time to act, for the right principles and in the right way." It takes power to live in the moment and St.

St. Joseph demonstrates patience by focusing on the tasks at hand (caring for his spouse and daughter). He trust that God will lead reveal to him the next step at the right time. I believe he was able to stay in the

present because of his prayer life. Scott Hahn wrote once: "If we do not fill our mind with prayer, it will fill itself with anxieties, worries, temptations, resentments, and unwelcome memories." Joseph was a man of prayer.

Important Dates

April 4 – Easter Sunday

April 11- Divine Mercy Sunday

April 22- Earth Day

April 25- World Day of Prayer for Vocations

April 25- Catholic Home Missions Appeal



Personal Penance Service Easter: This Man God Has Raised

Beginning:

(+) God come to my assistance, Lord make haste to help me.

Opening Prayer:

Merciful Father, I am guilty of sin. As I prepare to confess my sins before you help me to truly know the sins of my life and to be truly sorry for them. Your promises are just; therefore, I trust that you will forgive me my sins and cleanse me from every stain of sin. May my sins be forgiven through Jesus Name in this great Sacrament, and in His blood may my soul be made clean. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Peter proceeded to speak and said: "[You know] what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. This man God raised [on] the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name."

Quick Reflections:

Peter reveals in first public sermon on the Day of Pentecost that God has been at work to bring about reconciliation between God and man. Peter reminds us that we human beings have done our worst by nailing Christ to the Cross, but God's love was more powerful and raised Christ from the dead. Sometimes crucifixes

are pictured with hammers and pliers attached or nearby to remind us that every time we sin, we nail Christ to the Cross and every time we forgive, we pull the nail out. How many of your sins did Jesus take to the cross?

Examination of Conscience

1. Have I prayed today?
2. Do I make prayer a regular priority in my life?
3. Do I live my life in such a way that others will know that I am a Christian.
4. Do I hold grudges? Have I refused to forgive?
- 5 Do I read Sacred Scripture?
6. Have I broken any of my baptismal vows?
7. Do I ask God for forgiveness or just presume it?
8. Do I treat others with respect?
9. Do I treat myself with respect?
10. Do I see everything as a gift from God?
11. Do I take my relationship with Jesus seriously?
12. Do I celebrate my faith or hide it?

Time for Individual Confession

At this time, you should go and celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with the priest and afterwards come back and pray your prayer of thanksgiving in addition to your penance.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

O God, of Whose mercies there is no number, and of Whose goodness the treasure is infinite; I render thanks to Your most gracious majesty for the gifts of mercy You have bestowed upon me. Please never forsake me but please prepare me for the life to come. I ask this , through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

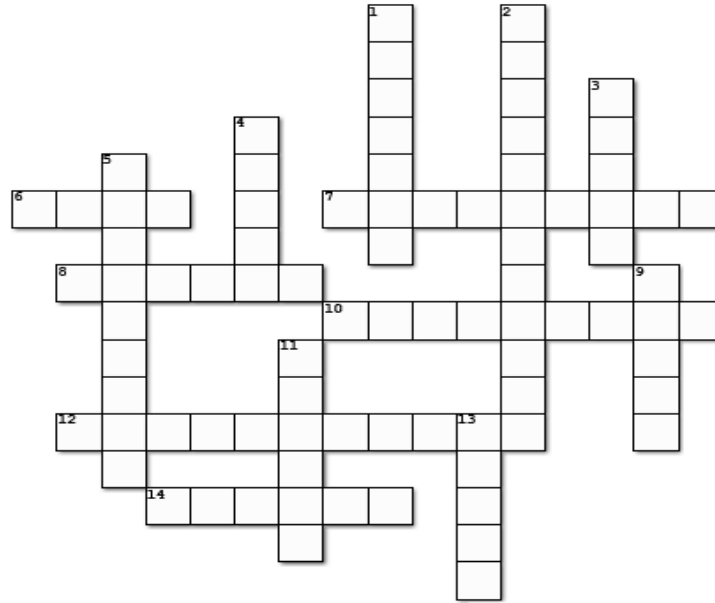
May almighty God bless me (+), protect me from all evil and bring me to everlasting life. Amen



Please check out www.stjoemanchester.org
St. Joseph's Facebook Page for my "New Mercies" Video reflections. Every morning, I reflect on one of the Scripture readings for the day.

April Crossword

Name: _____



Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

Across

- 6. only apostle found at the foot of the cross
- 7. 50 Days after Easter
- 8. Name given to the good thief
- 10. Man who buried Jesus. Joseph of ?
- 12. Day Jesus entered into Jerusalem (Two Words)
- 14. Foster father of Jesus

Down

- 1. bird mentioned in passion story.
- 2. Sunday after Easter (2 Words)
- 3. Person who helped Christ carry his cross
- 4. name of statue that depicts Blessed Virgin Mary holding dead body of Jesus
- 5. What is celebrated 9 months after the Annunciation
- 9. Denied Christ Three Times
- 11. Good News
- 13. Person found inside Jesus' tomb

Answers
 Across: 6 = John 7 = Pentecost 8 = Dismas 10 = Arimathea 12 = Palm Sunday 14 = Joseph
 Down: 1 = Rooster 2 = Divine Mercy 3 = Simon 4 = Pieta 5 = Christmast 9 = Peter 11 = Gospel 13 = Angel



Regina Caeli

Queen of Heaven



Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia.

The Son whom you merited to bear, alleluia,
has risen as he said, alleluia.

Pray for us to God, alleluia.

Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia!

For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.

Let us pray:

O God, who through the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, did vouchsafe to give joy to the world; grant, we beseech you, that through his Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.



Catholic
Current

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A PRAYER FOR HEALING VICTIMS OF ABUSE

God of endless love,
ever caring, ever strong,
always present, always just:
You gave your only Son
to save us by his blood on the cross.



Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace,
join to your own suffering
the pain of all who have been hurt
in body, mind, and spirit
by those who betrayed the trust placed in them.



Hear the cries of our brothers and sisters
who have been gravely harmed,
and the cries of those who love them.
Soothe their restless hearts with hope,
steady their shaken spirits with faith.
Grant them justice for their cause,
enlightened by your truth.



Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts,
heal your people's wounds
and transform brokenness into wholeness.
Grant us the courage and wisdom,
humility and grace, to act with justice.
Breathe wisdom into our prayers and labors.
Grant that all harmed by abuse may find peace in justice.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.