



APRIL 11, 2021 | 2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER (DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY)

HOLY FAMILY PARISH

312 Tazewell Avenue, Tazewell, VA 24651

(276) 988-4626 | email: theword1875@verizon.net | facebook: search Holy Family SWVA

ST. THERESA'S

312 Tazewell Ave.
Tazewell, VA 24651

ST. ELIZABETH'S

160 Merrick Lane
Pocahontas, VA 24635

ST. MARY'S

1122 Farmer Street
Richlands, VA 24641

ST. JOSEPH'S

1007 Independence Rd.
Grundy, VA 24614

Divine Mercy at the Service of Peace and Communion

There was a missionary who was in the habit of going around town and sharing spiritual flyers to people. Soon, one little boy joined him in carrying out this mission of touching lives through flyers that were really elating. They did this every Sunday unabated. One fateful Sunday it was raining profusely and the missionary decided not to go out for the distribution of the flyers he made that week which were captioned “Hold on! There is still hope.” He was, however, surprised when the little boy showed up not minding the heavy rain. The missionary was shocked that the boy could make it but asked him to drop the idea of giving out flyers that Sunday. The boy insisted that he had a raincoat and an umbrella so the rain would not be a hindrance.

After some moments of argument, the boy’s persistence made the missionary to allow him to go. He was excited as he ran into the rain and instead of their normal visits to parks

and walkways he went from house to house, knocking and dropping the flyer to whomsoever opened the door. He spent so much time doing this and at the last house he visited he knocked for about five minutes but there was no response. He made to go but decided to knock and wait further. He was about to give up when an old woman opened the door. Smiling, he gave her the flyer and said “This message is from God.” The boy left and was deeply happy that he had accomplished the task for that Sunday.

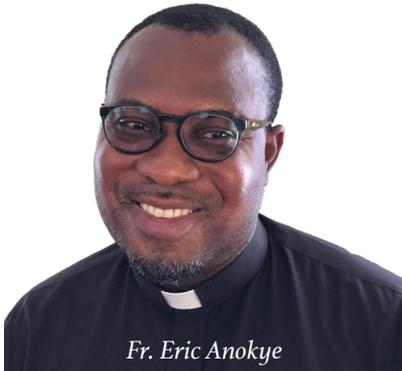
At church the next Sunday an old woman indicated that she had a testimony to share. She went ahead to tell the congregation that she had been coming with her husband to the church every Sunday until she lost him while they were away on a trip. She then said that she had been coming but nobody had noticed her mourning cloth nor the absence of her husband. She went on to say that she had been lonely—her only child died years ago before he even turned 20. She was indeed troubled and hopeless and lacked peace until that Sunday when she decided to end it all by hanging herself.

She had fixed the rope and was putting her neck in the noose and kicking the stool off her feet when someone kept knocking on the door. She took some time thinking that the person would go away but the person continued. She came down,

went to the door and found a little boy with a flyer who said to her “This message is from God.” Opening the flyer she saw the caption “Hold on! There is still hope.” She sat down and read. After reading the flyer, she felt an inner peace and saw reason to live and to be happy. She saw herself as a blessed and lucky woman. She went up and disengaged the rope and was thankful to the little boy who dared the rain to come and give her that message of peace. The boy and the missionary were in the church and they were utterly speechless.

There are some moments in our lives when the whole world seems to be crashing on our heads. It could be a situation of confusion, fear of the unknown and, more severely, absence of peace due to some experiences or encounters which at times seem to signal that God has abandoned us. At such moments some people tend to be utterly confused and restless. Others in a bid to find solace take to some activities that end up aggravating and increasing their problems.

The above situation could have been the apt description of the apostles when our Lord Jesus Christ was arrested, bullied, killed and buried. They were devastated and scattered (Zech.13:7). However, the resurrection was meant to mark a turning point for them (to bring them back from where they have been scattered—Isaiah 54:7) but they were still afraid, confused, faithless and lacked peace.



Fr. Eric Anokye

St. Augustine defined peace as the tranquility that comes from order and order is the proper arranging of all parts. This means that peace results when things are properly ordered within and outside of an individual.

From what happened when Jesus Christ was arrested one could attest to the fact that the apostles lost every sign of order as they lost hope and were ultimately disturbed; peace went on vacation and they were scattered (Matt.26:31). They actually took refuge in the upper room where they locked the doors for fear of the Jews (John 20:19). The upper room became for them a comfort zone; but how long would they continue to be inside a locked room? Often we build upper rooms for ourselves not for prayers like on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1) but for hiding on account of fears.

Coming to them on the evening of the resurrection day, the initial words of our Lord to them captured the situation they were in. To them he said: "Peace be with you!" This phrase should be understood as addressing their situation. Jesus couldn't have wished them peace if they were enjoying peace. Hence he meant to tell them to replace their troubled minds and confused heads with peace from the power of the resurrection. When our Lord appeared to them he said "peace be with you" not just once but twice and yet one more time after eight days when the doubting Thomas was present.

The emphasis on peace showed its expediency. It is also understandable that one challenge led to another.

With the absence of peace the apostles became hopeless and faithless. They needed the physical presence of Jesus Christ to lead them out of fear into faith, from devastation to peace. There is actually a link from disillusion to fear and lack of divine touch and connection. We could thus say that there was at that point the absence of faith, peace and divine mercy, but the resurrection of Jesus was meant to lead them to the realization of all these divine benefits.

Our Lord Jesus Christ came to undo our past and to restore our losses. By the power of his resurrection our fear is defeated and our faith is renewed. Thomas in the gospel of today stands as a representative of our doubt and faithlessness. He was not around the first time our Lord appeared to the others. We are not told where he went. He missed that first encounter with the risen Lord; we also remember that on that first meeting our Lord breathed on them and said "receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:21). After he also sent them on the mission to evangelize and forgive sins.

Being absent from the encounter with Christ and the reception of the Holy Spirit of God, (though he was lucky to be present on the day of Pentecost Act 2:1ff) Thomas was not renewed with the others so he continued to live in the past condition of fear, doubt and lack of peace. No wonder he stood his ground and would not believe unless he saw and touched. This is contrary to the divine injunction that our faith be certain even when we have not seen and should also be an assurance of the things we hoped for (Heb. 11:1ff). (Over)

PASTOR

Fr. Eric Anokye
eanokye@richmonddiocese.org
(276) 385-7312

OFFICE MANAGER/ BOOKKEEPER

Lydia St. Peter

OFFICE HOURS

Mon-Fri 9:30AM - 2:30PM

Please call the parish office to make arrangements for the **Sacraments of Baptism, Anointing of the Sick or Holy Matrimony** as well as funerals. **Reconciliation** is available from 30 minutes before a scheduled Mass.

MASS TIMES

SATURDAY

4PM - St. Joseph's

6PM - St. Mary's

SUNDAY

9AM - St. Elizabeth's

11:30AM - St. Theresa's

MON | WED | FRI

10AM - St. Theresa's

Cover image:

Peter Paul Rubens, *The Incredulity of St. Thomas*, 1613

When we are disconnected from God through our absence from the sacraments and from hearing the word of God we live in fear and lack the needed peace. When we are disconnected from God we run the risk of being unable to receive the infusion of the Holy Spirit and the divine commissioning. Like Thomas, we fall into doubt and disbelief because we missed the divine action.

The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is the highest expression of divine mercy which began with his death on the cross which marked the paying of our debts and our liberation from sin and death. It was actually divine mercy that can describe the coming of Jesus Christ in our midst. It was divine mercy that moved him to die for us even when we were still sinners (Romans 5:8; Psalm 78:32). That same divine mercy brought about his resurrection because if he did not rise from the death we could have been lost with vain hope (1 Cor.15:12-14). With God's mercy on us, we are expected to show mercy to others (Luke 6:36).

If one looks round the world one would discover that one of the problems facing our world is disaffection and inattention to mercy for one another. The uprisings and wars around our globe are end products of lack of mercy and pardon. God not only sent his Son to die on account of our sins and cancelled our debt, he also granted us pardon and mercy. No wonder that on this day our Lord in his commission told the apostles to forgive sins—that is, to grant pardon. This is an indication that with the resurrection of Jesus Christ divine mercy has been granted to us. It is one of the indications of the sacrament of penance through which our sins are forgiven and we are granted mercy and pardon.

When we experience divine mercy, we receive peace and that peace helps us to build and maintain an enduring community. This was the case with the early community formed by the apostles after the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the First Reading today (Acts 4:32-35) we are told that the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul. This means that were united in peace governed by love.

Let this day be for us a day to reflect on God's search for us in spite of our sinfulness, like the boy in our story who defied the rain to share the life changing flyers. Let it be an opportunity for us to drop the garment of fear of anything and rejoice over the resurrection of Christ. Let it be a moment of faith for us to undo the doubts of Thomas. Let it also be for us an opportunity show mercy to others, especially those who have wronged us, knowing fully that God is always forgiving us and granting us divine mercy without which we cannot stand (Psalm 130:3). It is also a day for us to revitalize our communities by giving peace a chance.

Have a blissful Sunday and remain awesomely blessed in the week ahead!



The Dancing Bear and the Hidden Messiah

BY DEACON LAWRENCE KLIMECKI

Did you see the dancing bear?

There is a certain type of video that is popular on the internet. It is an awareness test or a perception test. In a typical video you will see two teams, one dressed in white and one dressed in black. As the two teams begin to weave in and out and around each other, you are asked to count the number of times the team in white passes the ball.

You focus on the team in white, carefully counting the numbers of times the players pass the ball to each other as they constantly move around the players dressed in black who are doing the same thing.

At the end of the video the number of passes is given and you pat yourself on the back for getting it right or shrug for having missed one or two. But then a question comes on the screen, “did you see the dancing bear?”

“There was a dancing bear?” you think to yourself.

Sure enough, as the video is played back, there is clearly a man dressed in a black bear costume dancing across the screen from one side to the other. How could you miss him? Easy, you weren’t looking for him.

As you focused on the players in white, your mind filtered out the players dressed in black. So when a man in a black bear costume dances across the scene, your mind dismisses it as irrelevant to the task of focusing on the players in white.

Our perception of things is affected by what we expect to see.

The Jewish people in first century Jerusalem were looking for a Messiah that would come as a conquering king, defeating the Romans and delivering God’s people from the yoke of oppression. They were not looking for a humble rabbi who spoke of the love and mercy and grace of God. Because Jesus did not fit their expectation of what the Messiah should be, He was rejected and persecuted by the authorities.

Do we still reject Christ and His teachings, given to us through His Church, because He does not fit into our idea of what He should be?

As Christians we interpret all of scripture, including the entire Old Covenant, the Law, the Prophets, and the

Psalms, in the light of the resurrected Christ. Jesus is the suffering servant, raised from the dead and glorified.

It was Jesus Himself who taught us to see things in a different light, to refocus our attention on the things that mattered. It was Jesus who opened the minds of the apostles so that they may understand the scriptures. And it is this understanding that has been handed down to us through the Magisterium and Tradition.

It was a lack of understanding, an ignorance, that led to the death of the Lord. And it is this ignorance that still keeps people from everlasting light.

It really is a matter of trust. Do we trust in God? Do we trust Our Lord to guide us in how we live our lives? Are we willing to put aside our willfulness and stubbornness? Are we willing to open our minds to the possibility that God is acting in our lives in ways we do not expect?

We cannot control the events that take place in our lives; that is for God. We can, however control how we respond to those events. It is God’s part to bring events and circumstances and opportunities into our lives. It is our part to trust in Him, to see the opportunities that exist within the trials and tribulations. In the midst of the storms that are visited upon us, God also offers us refuge.

God uses the ordinary circumstances of our lives to accomplish extraordinary things. But we have to trust that those circumstances may not be what we expect.

Mother Angelica, the founder of EWTN, once said: “I am not afraid to fail, I am scared to death of dying and having the Lord say to me, ‘Angelica, this is what you might have done had you trusted me more’.”

Because we have such a powerful advocate with the Father, we still may turn around and repent our sins. Christ died for the expiation not only of our sins but for those of the whole world. With that repentance a conversion of heart is required. To choose to remain in ignorance is to live in contradiction and not in the Truth

Today we receive the great commission from God, to preach the Good News that through repentance, sins are forgiven. We are called to go out and show the world the dancing bear.

mass intentions

Date	Intention
4/10 SATURDAY	
4PM	St. Joseph parishioners
6PM	St. Mary parishioners

4/11 SUNDAY	
9AM	Ron Lambert †
11:30AM	Mark Law

council members

PARISH COUNCIL:

Tonya Hylton, Frannie Minton, Ralph Shawver, Cindy Deskins, Barbara Jones, Donna Lambert

FINANCE COUNCIL:

Kathy & Bob Buchanan, Randy Bolling, Doug Vance, Anne Danko, Jim Talbert, Jackie Shawver, Janet McDonagh

please pray for

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Louise Serreno* | Rick Hall |
| Margie Stutso * | Lucas Boyd |
| Margaret Shawver | Doug Tabor |
| Billy Akers | Ralph Heldreth |
| Scotty McBride | Elizabeth Managan |
| Gerry Hankins | Chris Jessie |
| Clarence Moore | Leo Brown |
| Lexi Cox | May Anne Rynne |
| Sarah Wall | Carolina Ferrare |
| Paris Whisher | Junior Aiken |
| Tammy Bennett | Mary Spencer |
| Margaret Wasilewski | Shirley Hylton |
| Nic Ulate | Anne St. Peter |
| Elizabeth Gregory | Rayburn Minton |
| Frannie Minton | Jeanne Hash |
| Sue Bailey | Philip & Pat Imel |
| Christian Lambert | Lara Marshall |
| Shane Neal | Virginia Shumate |
| Tiffany Hladek | Jim Shumate |
| Tom & Sandra Bost | Doug Vance |
| Archbishop John Kwofie | Andrew Satmary |
| Carolyn Wade | Frank Mauceri |
| Stacy Hall | Lori Hale |
| Pete Belcher | Dee Gentile |
| Willie Hylton | Glenn Harrison |
| Bryan Gunter | Ray Ann Betzares |
| Michael Beavers | |

stewardship of treasure

Donations Received as of April 4 (Week 40)		
CHURCH	ATTENDANCE	RECEIVED
St. Joseph's	20	\$ 148
St. Elizabeth's	32	\$600
St. Mary's	16	\$1,100
St. Theresa's	59	\$1,395
Total Offertory	127	\$3,253
Outside Donations		\$500
Year to Date Received		\$95,587
Goal		\$88,461
Ahead/Behind Goal		+\$7,126

OUTSIDE DONATIONS—THANK YOU!

Richmond, VA donor: \$400
Hampton, VA donor: \$100

BUILDING FUND

St. Elizabeth's: \$600 | St. Mary's: \$200

EASTER WEEK COLLECTIONS:

St. Elizabeth's: \$610 | St. Mary's: \$25 | St. Theresa's: \$515
St. Elizabeth's Rice Bowl: \$77

ANNUAL DIOCESAN APPEAL

Our goal was \$6760, but Holy Family Parish has already raised over \$7455!

HOLY FAMILY NEWS

Mass continues to be livestreamed Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 10AM from St. Theresa's and the church will be open for anyone who wishes to attend in person. The 11:30AM Sunday Mass at St. Theresa's will also continue to be livestreamed for those who are not able to join us.

Have you checked out Fr. Eric's "**Cast into the Deep**" column on our Facebook page? Fr. Eric carefully crafts a reflection every day on the readings. Use it daily and grow your faith!

facebook.com/holyfamilyswva

THIS WEEK:

There will be no daily Mass this Wednesday (April 14) due to a deanery meeting.

All four HFP churches will have a building fund collection this weekend.

NEXT WEEK:

Bible study resumes next Wednesday evening (April 21) at 7PM!

RETREAT: THE HEART OF MARY

Spend a weekend deepening your understanding and devotion to the Blessed Mother. Find out why so many people today seek out Mary for peace, direction and hope, and how she might be able to give the same to you. From May 7-9, the Catholic Conference Center in Hickory, NC is offering a weekend retreat—a perfect gift to share with your mother for Mother's Day. There are options for one night or two, plus some for commuter sessions and even a separate Mother's Day Sunday brunch. In addition to powerful talks, you'll be able to enjoy a beautiful setting in full springtime bloom and delicious full-course meals. Visit catholicconference.org/mary or call (828) 327-7441.

birthdays & anniversaries:

APRIL

BIRTHDAYS—14: Nerissa Carpio, Michael Beavers | 16: Corey White

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Benjamin Farley Agency, Inc.



Nationwide

3144 E Cumberland Rd.
Bluefield, WV 24701

Mike Romeo, Agent

(304) 325-9357
Bluefield

(304) 425-3678
Princeton



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