

EASTER MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR



Dear Parish Family of Assumption,

We believe in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. He suffered under Pontius Pilot, was crucified, died, buried and on the third day (Sunday) he rose from the dead. We have spent the last 40 days in LENT preparing spiritually for the Triduum...the three high holy days: the First day...**Holy Thursday** with the institution of the Holy Eucharist when for the first time, while reclined at the Passover Table, Jesus takes bread, blesses it and sharing with his disciples says: "Take and eat, this is my Body." After the Passover Meal, Jesus takes a cup of wine from the table again gives thanks, blesses it and says: "Take and drink, this is my Blood." On Holy Thursday, the night before he died Jesus gives us food and drink for an otherwise very hungry and lonely journey. What a sign of unity, what a way to reinitiate ourselves over and over again Sunday after Sunday or for many of us every day at Mass...though we are many we become one...eating the ONE bread and drinking from the ONE cup. Holy Communion with one another, with God.

The Second day of the Triduum is **Good Friday**...the humiliation of the Cross... the beatings, being publicly stripped naked for all to see, whipped, fashioned to the wood of the cross with nails and robe...then lifted up for three hours, till he breaths his last. And his final words: a plea to his Abba (Daddy)... "Father forgive them." Mercy. His whole life and death are about Mercy. And the Third day the **Holy Saturday Easter Vigil**...anticipating Easter Sunday... the most sacred of all Catholic Christian Eucharistic Celebrations...rich with symbols of FIRE, LIGHT, WATER, BELLS, INCENSE, MUSIC, THE WORD OF GOD, THE BREAD AND WINE, AND our CANDIDATES who wish to join our company as followers of Jesus through **Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist**...the three sacraments of Initiation. The Triduum, Thursday, Friday and Saturday...the holiest days mark the Jewish Passover, Good Friday and the Saturday Vigil anticipating Sunday...the **RESURRECTION**...when Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God passes over death....from life to a new life, never to die again.

Our Catholic Christian Faith is rich in tradition, heritage, celebration, symbol. Our God is fully human and divine. God is so near to us...present in each of us and so transcendent...present beyond and at a distance. God is very near and very far. God is love and mercy. He conquered sin and death to set us free from both sin and death. We need not wait till we die to be transformed with a new body. On this side of the grave, long before we suffer biological death we find our ways to live in darkness and dwell in our cold dark and damp tombs through: hatred, phobias, arrogance, self-righteousness, prejudice, holding onto our hurts, hurting back, excluding those who are different from us in race, religion, in politics and nationality, building walls instead of bridges, hoarding the world's resources yet claiming to be generous. We all sin and fall short. We all are blind and need to see as God sees, feel as God feels and forgive and God lavishes Mercy...even on those who executed his one and only Son. We are free to prefer the darkness or free to prefer as St. Benedict preached: "Prefer nothing to Christ!"

I pray this Easter you see yourselves as God sees you: as preferring nothing to Christ: in your fidelity in holy marriage, when you fast, pray and give alms to the poor, when you die to self and others come first, when you see the face of Jesus in others because you are very mindful of the face of Jesus in yourself. No one wants to live in the tomb...we are made for life and "our lives give glory to God when we are fully alive" as Irenaeus preaches. Thank you Parish Family of Assumption for the many ways you give me, our parish and the world life through the unique, generous, compassionate ways you die to self for others...in imitation of Christ.

Happy Easter and blessings upon you always. Love, *Fr. Tom*