

BULLETIN – APRIL 5

A blessed Easter to all our parishioners, alumni, and guests on this, the summit of all Christian solemnities, and the reason we are Christians. As with our other great events, notably the celebration of the Incarnation, the Church cannot confine itself to one day of celebration. In the case of Easter, we not only have an octave (eight days) of Easter, but a whole season to revel in the spiritual high the Church hopes we are getting after our long (and cold!) Lenten preparations.

The readings for both the solemn Easter Vigil and for Easter Sunday morning do not change from year to year. We as the people of God need to hear the truth of these readings over and over again, to have the fact of the Resurrection drilled into our minds and hearts even as we open them in loving acceptance. The second reading from Colossians echoes a familiar theme of St. Paul: “You have died,” he says in 3:3. “All of us who have been baptized in Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death (Romans 6:3). “I have been crucified with Christ, and it is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). Our old selves died in the waters of baptism. That was made possible by Christ’s actual death, which he suffered in our place. We deserved it by choosing the death of sin. He is the innocent Lamb of God who took our sins on himself, all the way to the Cross.

When you see that Easter candle burning in church throughout this holy season, be reminded that you have already died. Living in Christ, you have nothing to fear from anyone or anything, not mockery, not oppression, not terrorism, not ill health, not even physical death. With Christ, you can say, “Been there, done that!?” And now you can get about the business of living in him, for him, with him, and giving witness to his Resurrection so that others, too, may live. Your eternal life has already begun. Every time you share in the Eucharist, you are participating in the never-ending life of the Kingdom of heaven.

Thank you, thank you to all who have been instrumental in making Easter the great celebration we are all enjoying.

Our catechists have assisted us in bringing numerous people to the sacraments during this Easter season. We have several baptisms coming up during the next few weeks, about a dozen making their First Communion, and just under that number being confirmed by Bishop Walkowiak at the Cathedral on dates in May. Those of us who remember the days when everyone either made their First Communion and confirmation with the class or had to wait till the next year might tear their hair out over the variety of situations and circumstances facing our catechists these days. Both adults and children come in at various stages of preparation and instruction, and the one-size-fits-all approach simply doesn’t work. We are proud of those who have taken their instructions so seriously that they eagerly read and study on their own, bringing insights to class that had not even been discussed.

Our organist and choir put in many hours of rehearsal, especially for our greatest feasts. Music is carefully chosen to be both appealing and appropriate to truly accompany the liturgy, most of which should ideally be sung when it is possible. In the case of the pastor’s voice, it is no longer possible to do something truly beautiful for God,

at least by human standards. Our choir, on the other hand, is another story, and we deeply appreciate the hard work they all put into their artistry.

No presentation of a public event such as the liturgy is complete without attention to the space; and in this case, our “worship space,” our parish church, is simply yet tastefully decorated by members of a few parish households who have taken this project on as a kind of family mission. The speed with which they can smoothly change the sanctuary from one liturgical season to another has a touch of the miraculous about it, and we are grateful to our “backstage” crew for their deft handling of all the liturgical accoutrements.

Our parish staff has overcome numerous trials and travails to keep things moving along efficiently during various recent disabilities affecting both staff and family members. We’re sorry if the service wasn’t always what you expected, when you expected it, and we thank you for your patience. There were times when things were happening so fast that we didn’t have a chance to get coverage for the phone or to call about an appointment that was going to be missed. You have all responded with grace and charity, and your kindness has been exemplary.

Finally, I am personally grateful to Fathers Bernott, Vainavicz, and Kiragu for their very competent assistance at the various services of Holy Week and Easter. It is an honor and a privilege for all of us to be of service to you.

Our Franciscan Sisters have advised us of the death back on December 1, 2014, of **Sister Mary Loretta Keserauskas, O.S.F.**, age 98, who served for a time as a teacher at our parish school. She also worked closely with our late pastor (1971-81) Father Albert Bernott, who was the pastor at St. Michael’s in Coopersville when the school opened there in 1962. Sister Mary Loretta served as the first principal and at the same time as the teacher for first and second grade--quite a challenge. She was such an inspiration to those students that nearly a dozen years later, they paid for her flight to attend their high school graduation! May she rest in peace!

Our charity collection after Communion this weekend (April 4-5) will be given to the Rice Bowl program of Catholic Relief Services. The CRS offering two weekends ago is intended to assist in all the various programs where the CRS enables our money to serve victims of natural disasters, war refugees, and so on. Rice Bowl is specifically for food aid, especially food for children. You are welcome to use individual “rice bowls” of your own making all through Lent for a progressive gathering of small offerings from your family members. We decided some years ago to forego that part of the program. We faced the prospect of dozens and dozens of small boxes filled with coins, which had to be painstakingly sorted, rolled, carried to the bank and deposited, all at a very busy time of the year. We are happy to encourage your charity for food aid, but we are also happy to receive your charity in currency of any denomination to make the task of processing it more realistic.

Fr. Den

Thought for the week: “Outside of the cross of Jesus Christ, there is no hope in this world. That cross and resurrection at the core of the Gospel is the only hope for

humanity. Wherever you go, ask God for wisdom on how to get that Gospel in, even in the toughest situations of life" (Ravi Zacharias, 1946- , Christian apologist and evangelist).