

April 5, 2023

Dear Parishioner,

Jesus bestowed upon Saint Peter the honor of being his Vicar - visible representative and first among the apostles - despite, perhaps even because of Peter's imperfection. My Spiritual Director has given me many helpful suggestions through the years. One of the best is this: whenever Jesus asks a question of someone in the Gospel, imagine him asking it of you. What answer will you give him?

As we continue in this holiest week in the Church's Liturgical Year, here are three questions Jesus asked Peter that we would do well to consider. How we answer these questions determines in large part how we spend this Thursday evening through Sunday morning.

- Who do you say that I am? (Matthew 16:15)
- Could not keep watch with me for one hour? (Matthew 26:40)
- Do you love me? (John 21:17)

I invite you to join the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Community in observing, celebrating, and being touched (possibly even transformed) on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil, and Easter Sunday.

- Holy Thursday 6pm: Commemoration of the Last Supper
- Good Friday - Noon: Stations of the Cross
6pm: The Passion of the Christ and Veneration of the Cross
- Easter Vigil - 8:30 pm
- Easter Sunday Masses - 9:00 and 11:30 am

Live, Local, and Late-breaking

Unless **MORE** people sign up to keep watch with Christ at the Altar of Repose following the Holy Thursday Liturgy, the hours will have to be reduced. At least two people **must** be present at all times. Right now, there are not enough volunteers even to go to midnight. You may sign up before Holy Thursday services begin. I will announce the hours of the watch after we receive communion.

I met with the members of the Search Committee for a new Director of Religious Education yesterday (Tuesday). We are saddened by how it worked out, but we are grateful for the new beginnings brought about by Bob Pennington and pray for his future. The Committee agrees we don't want or need a lengthy period without a new Director. During the search process, another very good candidate was interviewed. I will be consulting with the Pastoral Council next week to seek their guidance and input.

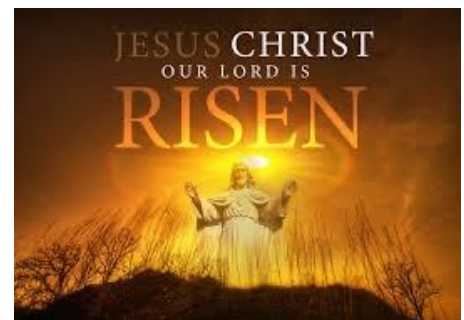
May we walk with our Lord Jesus Christ and one another to the Upper Room, the Garden of Gethsemane, on the Way of the Cross, to Calvary and Golgotha, the tomb where his body lay, and on the Road to Emmaus.

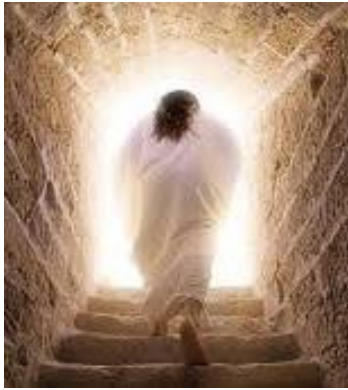
Father Paul Wharton

An Easter Sermon

Are there any who are devout lovers of God?
Let them enjoy this beautiful bright festival!
Are there any who are grateful servants?
Let them rejoice and enter into the joy of their Lord!
Are there any weary from fasting?
Let them now receive their due!
If any have toiled from the first hour,
let them receive their reward.
If any have come after the third hour,
let them with gratitude join in the feast!
Those who arrived after the sixth hour,
let them not doubt; for they shall not be short-changed.
Those who have tarried until the ninth hour,
let them not hesitate; but let them come too.
And those who arrived only at the eleventh hour,
let them not be afraid by reason of their delay.

For the Lord is gracious and receives the last even as the first.
The Lord gives rest to those who come at the eleventh hour,
even as to those who toiled from the beginning.
To one and all the Lord gives generously.
The Lord accepts the offering of every work.
The Lord honors every deed and commends their intention.
Let us all enter into the joy of the Lord!
First and last alike, receive your reward.
Rich and poor, rejoice together!
Conscientious and lazy, celebrate the day!
You who have kept the fast, and you who have not,
rejoice, this day, for the table is bountifully spread!





Feast royally, for the calf is fatted.
Let no one go away hungry.
Partake, all, of the banquet of faith.
Enjoy the bounty of the Lord's goodness!
Let no one grieve being poor,
for the universal reign has been revealed.
Let no one lament persistent failings,
for forgiveness has risen from the grave.
Let no one fear death,
for the death of our Savior has set us free.
The Lord has destroyed death by enduring it.
The Lord vanquished hell when he descended into it.
The Lord put hell in turmoil even as it tasted of his flesh.

Isaiah foretold this when he said,
"You, O Hell, were placed in turmoil when he encountered you below."
Hell was in turmoil having been eclipsed.
Hell was in turmoil having been mocked.
Hell was in turmoil having been destroyed.
Hell was in turmoil having been abolished.
Hell was in turmoil having been made captive.
Hell grasped a corpse and met God.
Hell seized earth and encountered heaven.
Hell took what it saw and was overcome by what it could not see.

O death, where is your sting?
O hell, where is your victory?
Christ is risen, and you are cast down!
Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen!
Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice!
Christ is risen, and life is set free!
Christ is risen, and the tomb is emptied of its dead.
For Christ, having risen from the dead,
is become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep.
To Christ be glory and power forever and ever. Amen!
— Saint John Chrysostom (347-407)