

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for all our generous and loving volunteers who prepared an incredibly beautiful environment for our celebrations of the paschal feast. WOW!!! That so many people came together to celebrate the Triduum and Easter Sunday with us is a tribute to all the graces and blessings God is imparting on our community. I would like to thank the many people who reached out to me, Fr. Edgardo and members of the staff to express their appreciation and wonder at the immense beauty of the church but also the very positive energy and hope exhibited these days.

I am grateful for the wonderful music, the many lectors who proclaimed the Scriptures; the live-stream crew (which continues to outdo itself), those who prepared the flowers with such care, our Altar Servers and Master of Ceremonies, our parishioners who shared their reflection on the Seven Last Words of Jesus on Good Friday, volunteers who checked in the congregation and sanitized the church after Mass, and all who contributed to our Easter Collection. The joy of these days reminds us that when we get outside of ourselves...give God his due with a joyful heart and disposition...there is nothing we cannot do as the people of Saint Pius X parish!! What a wonderful tribute as we continue to celebrate the 70th anniversary since the founding of our parish.

Mea culpa!!! In my acknowledgment of our parish organizations, I inadvertently forgot to mention the members of our parish Finance Council and Parish Pastoral Council. I simply could not lead our parish without their support, professional strength, and vision for our parish family. I want to publicly acknowledge each of them here. Parish Finance Council: **Donna Schreiber, Chair; Stephen Philpott, Kathy Martel, Tom Cortopassi, Joe Martin and Don Gambelin.** Parish Pastoral Council: **Mary Chacon, Tom D’Orsi, Susie Hamlin, Stephanie Herbst, Marcela Lagarda, Oscar Ortiz, Gena Pass, Shalimar Perez, John Philpott, Alma Portillo, Balbina Quintana, Chris Swan, Mike Sweeney and David Tomatis.**

I would also like to publicly thank Rodney Yee, our always-faithful parishioner, for his assistance with the PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) application for Saint Pius X parish. Rodney works in the Finance Department of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. He always goes the distance for our parishes and schools. Rodney has been a source of calm and professionalism during this very difficult and trying year of dealing with the pandemic. I/we will always be grateful for Rodney’s kindness and support!

Today the Church celebrates Divine Mercy Sunday, first promulgated by Saint Pope John Paul II. It is appropriate that we reflect upon the nature of mercy in light of Christ’s own life and public ministry of mercy. Jesus Christ rising from the dead implicitly means that death and darkness have no mastery over those who, by water and the Holy Spirit conferred at Baptism, seek to emulate Jesus by our Christian identity and witness. Even in his moment of trial and tribulation at the hands of very human people, Jesus extended mercy to them. To his torturers and the jeering crowds, Jesus simply says, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing.” To the good thief who recognized in the face of Jesus the very epitome of mercy, Jesus says, “Today, you will be with me in paradise.” We cannot come to appreciate the full meaning of the Resurrection without understanding the nature and importance of mercy and forgiveness.

The Acts of the Apostles portrays a very idyllic community of the early Church. There was a dynamic unity of oneness of heart and minds with a strong communitarian dimension. We don't see a picture of selfishness but rather a deep corporate sense of responsibility for one another. Saint Luke accentuates how the resurrection helped the disciples establish a community rooted in prayer and mutual support. This radical call to discipleship is predicated upon a "life in common"; that is, a detachment from personal possessions and a self-giving and self-emptying for the good of all. This community spirit would allow the early Christians to devote themselves to prayer and evangelization and not be overly preoccupied with worldly or temporal worries and responsibilities.

John's Gospel narrative of Pentecost shows in a very clear and direct way the message of mercy which Jesus the teacher and Good Shepherd which he taught his disciples and those who heard him preach. There is the very riveting image of the Blessed Mother, the disciples and two-hundred companions hiding in a room because they were afraid of retribution from the authorities for their affiliation with Jesus. In his Passion, his closest friends had either betrayed him or simply walked away. They were now overwhelmed both with grief and fear. Jesus would have been most justified in either dismissing them or expressing anger and disappointment with their betrayal. Yet, as always, Jesus shows us "a more excellent way." In appearing to them, he says "Peace be with you!" not once but three times!!! Twice in this encounter at Pentecost and once when he appears a week later and greets Thomas. This response of Jesus is truly divine mercy.

Imagine what went through the minds of those gathered. Jesus gives them reassurance. He gives them the commission to leave that room, proclaim the Good News infused with the gift of the Holy Spirit, and set the world on fire with the light of Christ's merciful love. But there is a catch! He says to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." Just as God has forgiven us, we must always in turn forgive those who have wronged us. This is quite a challenging proposition to meet. Yet, in a spirit of faith, trust and detachment, we can emulate the mercy God so desires us to exercise. This is an essential aspect of our Christian identity and we have to work at it on a daily basis.

Father Richard Ho Lung, M.O.P., who visited us two years ago, (and who dons the cover of the bulletin this week) wrote this in *Diary of a Ghetto Priest*: "I believe our humanity is finally tested by our ability to love. By the greatness of our hearts. The more we can love, the more people we can serve with joy - especially the grotesque and the outcast - the more human we become. We cannot fathom the terror and the beauty when we love absolutely, without condition, all God's children." This is the ultimate expression of divine mercy, and we ask the Lord for the grace to open our hearts and our will to being disposed to be disciples of mercy, reconciliation, and understanding.

Congratulations to Logan Robert Sullivan who was baptized here at Saint Pius on Easter Sunday. He is the beautiful baby son of Sterling and Kristen Sullivan and grandson of Bob and Juliane Sullivan. We pray that Easter graces will abide with Logan all the days of his life!

--Fr. Tom