

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is so hard to believe that next Sunday is Palm Sunday! A fourth of the year is already over. Where has the time gone? As we prepare for the solemnity of Holy Week, let us continue to aspire to a conversion of heart and so dispose ourselves to being ready to celebrate the coming feasts. I encourage all of us to take advantage of the opportunity to partake in the Sacrament of Reconciliation before Easter. Father Edgardo and I have been edified by the number of people who are coming to Confession on Saturday afternoon as well as those who call and make an appointment. This is called one of the healing sacraments because it helps to bind up and heal those actions which separate us from God and one another. It is such a grace to accompany people through this sacred experience of healing and reconciliation.

Russell Shaw, in his book *Why We Need Confession*, wrote: “What is the truth? It might be stated this way: if our greatest dignity as human beings resides in the fact that we can be saints, our second-greatest dignity, paradoxically, concerns the fact that we are sinners. Dangerous and destructive as sin is, recognizing sin is an acknowledgement of our freedom and responsibility, and any acknowledgment of these contains the seeds of something better.” Shaw strikes the right balance between recognizing that we are God’s creation and thus worthy of dignity and that as human beings we sometimes fall short.

Many thanks to all who made our *Laetare Sunday* celebration at the 9:30 Mass so uplifting and truly joyous. To our outstanding young musicians Alex Young and Rocky and Rhett Pedrin. They added so much to our liturgical celebration. Thanks to our outstanding lectors, who represent our Confirmation Class: AJ Pass, Victoria Mendoza-Ceron, Sebi Lopez and Gabby Tomatis. We welcomed Atticus Morello who served Mass for the first time and was joined by his brothers Xavier and Lachlan. Congratulations are in order for Octavio Sebastian Lopez who received his First Holy Communion. Thanks to Sebi’s family and catechists who helped prepare him for this very special day!! May we pray for these young people who are such a sign of hope for our parish community! MY SINCERE THANKS ALSO TO THE MANY VOLUNTEERS WHO STAY AFTER MASS TO SANITIZE THE PEWS. I AM VERY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY!!

Today’s first reading from Jeremiah points to a new order of things; a passing from the old covenant to the new covenant which is Jesus Christ. The prophet Jeremiah describes how the Lord led the Jewish people out of slavery by his hand. Their captivity was the result of their having turned from God. “...for they broke my covenant and I had to show myself their master.” In the new covenant, God imprints his law of love upon their hearts. “I will be their God and they shall be my people.” Henceforth, an unbreakable bond of love, forgiveness and mercy will be forged between God and humanity for all time. Stephen B. Clark, in his book *The Old Testament in the Light of the New*, states: “The new covenant begins with Christ’s death and Resurrection, and with the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. It was with his Resurrection that he entered upon the glorious life that *swallowed up...what was mortal in him* (2 Cor 5:4). It was then that the new covenant life was made available to other human beings, to those who belonged to the old covenant and to those who did not.” God’s redemptive love is no longer the province of a select few but is open and available to all who seek him. We saw this reality unfold rather dramatically in the earliest days of the Church, when it moved from the epicenter of the Jewish world to the wide reaches of the Gentile world.

As we enter into the final weeks of Lent, John's Gospel reveals to us that the glorification of Jesus will be predicated upon his suffering and passion. The essential elements of surrender and loss allow Jesus to embark upon and ultimately complete his earthly mission. That "letting go" and lessening our need to control ironically is what leads us to true peace and fulfillment. The litany of examples Jesus offers us serves to accentuate true wealth and life. He speaks of a grain of wheat that cannot bear fruit unless it falls to the ground and dies. As human beings we are often preoccupied with self-preservation and minimizing any inconvenience. Not so with the Son of God. "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." It becomes clear that the Christian life is full of irony; it is only through loss that we experience gain and through death that we gain life. Jesus leads by example and thus those who follow him will share in the fullness of glory.

St. Jose Maria Escriva offers a beautiful reflection on the mystery of Christian discipleship, rooted in self-emptying and self-denial: "Christians must show others the saving power of the cross. The Cross must also be inserted in the very heart of the world. Jesus wants to be raised on high, there: in the factories and workshops, in the silence of libraries, in the loud clamor of the streets, in the stillness of the fields, in the intimacy of the family, in crowded gatherings; in stadiums...Wherever there is a Christian striving to lead an honourable life, he should, with his love, set up the Cross of Christ, who attracts all things to himself."

In this column next Sunday, as we celebrate Palm Sunday and the commencement of Holy Week, I have invited Tom D'Orsi to offer a reflection. I would like to offer parishioners the opportunity on a periodic basis to share their spiritual insights with the community. Tom is an example of true Christian fatherhood whose life mirrors that of St. Joseph, the father of our Lord. Tom is generous (to a fault, if that is possible); he edifies others by his deep faith and willingness to accompany others on their faith journey. He is also kind and funny...and reflects to spirit and hope for the today of St. Pius X and the tomorrow of our wonderful parish community!

I ask all of you to please take a look at the schedule of Holy Week and Easter liturgical celebrations. Please participate in the Sacred Triduum and help us continue to build up the kingdom of God here in our parish!

Fr. Tom