Dear St. Pius Family and Friends:

I wish to express to you and your families blessings this Easter Sunday! You are very much in my thoughts and prayers on this holiest day of the Christian year and I will be remembering you in my Easter Mass. The picture on the cover of this week’s bulletin was taken in Primošten, Croatia last summer. This scene overlooks the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Loreto. I chose this picture because it captures the essence of what we celebrate this holy day: even though there are dark clouds on the horizon what predominates is the magnificent light. This is the light of glory we celebrate in the triumph of the Cross - the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

In the Office of Readings of Friday of the Fourth Week of Lent is an Easter letter written by St. Athanasius and it seems so fitting for us this year: “Moreover, my friends, the God who first established this feast for us allows us to celebrate it each year. He who gave up his Son to death for our salvation, from the same motive gives us this feast, which is commemorated every year. This feast guides us through the trials that meet us in this world. God now gives us the joy of salvation that shines out from this feast, as he brings us together to form one assembly, uniting us all in spirit in every place, allowing us to pray together and to offer common thanksgiving, as is our duty on this feast. Such is the wonder of his love; he gathers to this feast those who are far apart and brings together in unity of faith those who may be physically far from each other.”

This year particularly, the Scriptures proclaimed during the Lenten Season just past has a certain resonance with us as we continue to live the effects of the Coronavirus that has truly paralyzed our daily routine and way of life. We have felt a myriad of emotions which has cascaded down upon us: fear, uncertainty, a real experience of disorientation and disequilibrium. These are real emotions and we need to face them. Imagine that these were the same raw emotions which gripped the disciples and friends of Jesus as they witnessed his passion and crucifixion and then went to the tomb where he was buried and found that he was not there.

I know that these have not been easy times for any of us. However, I would be lying if I didn't say that these have also been some of the most grace-filled and beautiful times as well. Daily I have watched families walking together and bike-riding; I have seen young people playing basketball on the courts and soccer on the field. When I go for walks, I am amazed how friendly people can be, acknowledging our common predicament with a smile and grace. These are times which have challenged our patience and perseverance; we have had to go from running around in a frantic pace to understanding that there are limits to what we can do. As we have watched people die and suffer, we have had to acknowledge that life is fragile and that, while we have it as God’s gift to us, we have to make it meaningful and worthwhile.

In today’s first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Peter says, “You know what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee... he went about doing good and healing all those oppressed…” This was the impression Jesus left on his friends. He gave utterly and completely of himself, even at the risk of being vilified and ultimately killed for standing up for the right. He was remembered for being close to the marginalized and wounded; for confounding those who lorded their authority with hypocrisy and indifference over the people for whom they were supposed to care. Jesus left us an example of how to strive to live holy and healthy lives, made richer by our own desire to serve others and to foster reconciliation and healing. These days, while demanding much of us, also call us to seek “what is above.”

I wish to express my gratitude, beyond words, to all our parishioners who have really stepped to the plate during these days of crisis and uncertainty. They include: Ryan Herbst, Raul Velez, John Philpott, Tony Eiras, Barbara Mosso (cleaning our sacred linens); Stephanie Herbst for the liturgical environment; Blake McNally, Marcela LaGarda, Ryan Kerzic and the graduate students from Stanford University who have served as lectors (especially during our weekday Masses); our musicians; Karen Elmore and Linda Asti along with the Women’s Club who have supported efforts to feed the homeless during this time; our St. Pius students who have been calling our seniors to check in on them; our Good Friday reflection speakers: Michelle Mendez, Antonio Benoit; Oscar Ortiz, Kate Gray, Blake McNally, Mary Chacon and Joe Martin; our St. Vincent de Paul Society; Denise Severi and Rene Barton (Redwood Grill) for providing meals for the priests; Marc Nava, Catie Costa and our incredible school faculty and staff; and our Parish Center staff who have been so supportive and understanding during this time. Everyone has come together to live the spirit of the MAGIS so generously and lovingly.

Thank you for continuing to support our parish family financially during this time. Your generosity is extraordinary and a real sign of grace and unity.

Please also pray for and remember those who have died across the globe from Coronavirus and their loved ones; our health care workers who are truly heroic; members of the Armed Forces and our local Redwood City Police Department and other first responders. We owe them our thanks and gratitude!

I wish to leave you with this Scripture passage from Colossians. May these words inspire us to live the Easter joy which is God’s great gift to us! “As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.” [Colossians 3: 12-15].

Alleluia!

~Fr. Tom