

**For The Bulletin Of
April 19, 2015**

**THE THIRD SUNDAY OF
EASTER**

From Father Robert

Why think about sins and forgiveness during Easter? What a bummer! Easter is a joyful time to celebrate new Life! It is thus surprising that repentance and forgiveness (acts we much more readily associate with Lent) figure so prominently in all three readings assigned to this Third Sunday of Easter. The readings suggest to us that we, unlike the disciples to whom Jesus appeared after the resurrection, cannot look at, touch, see with our own eyes this Jesus Who was dead and now is risen to new Life. Yet Jesus gives us another, just as concrete, means to come to belief in the new Life of resurrection. Repentance and forgiveness are themselves encounters with the risen Jesus, an invitation to deeper belief, and an experience of our own coming to share in Jesus' risen Life.

Jesus opened the minds of the disciples to grasp two things written in the Scriptures: that He "would suffer and rise from the dead," and that "repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in His name to all the nations." Our repentance – conversion of life – turns us to the God Who forgives and Who fills us with the new Life of resurrection. Ultimately, this risen Life within us empowers a way of living that witnesses to God's forgiveness of our sinfulness.

Our belief in the resurrection cannot be passive. Our belief in the risen Jesus is

made visible when we "preach in His name" the kind of repentance leading to the new life of forgiveness. We encounter Jesus today when we repent of our sins and forgive others. Jesus "was made known" in the breaking of the bread and in repentance and forgiveness. Why is forgiveness so central to embracing Jesus' risen Life? Being forgiven by God for our offenses means that the weakened or destroyed relationship caused by sin is strengthened or restored. We become strong once again in the Life that God offers us. Forgiving others who have hurt us means that we are not controlled by their hurtful actions, a control that can lead to resentment, anger, hate. Forgiving another might not erase the hurt, but it does free us to live with compassion and joy. These are virtues of risen Life. This is risen Life: "You are forgiven." This is our witness to the resurrection: "I forgive you."

Living The Paschal Mystery

The resurrection claims us as witnesses not only to God's forgiveness of us, but also to our forgiveness of one another. Repentance – conversion of life – opens new opportunities to touch and see the risen Jesus. Repentance opens us to God's gift of forgiveness. Repentance opens us to the new Life of resurrection Jesus offers. Ultimately, the resurrection is a pledge of new Life for us and makes visible God's forgiveness of our sinfulness. Forgiveness is part of the reality of risen Life; it is the effect of death and resurrection.

Repentance and forgiveness do not belong simply to Lent – there, that's over for another year! Instead, they are very much a part of the Easter mystery. Forgiveness is the virtue that enables us

not to allow past hurts to determine our decisions and actions in the here and now. Forgiveness opens up the space for creating together with the one forgiven a new future where we can “fall peacefully asleep.” Giving and receiving forgiveness is a resurrection activity. Walking and acting like a forgiven and forgiving people is how we make known the risen Jesus.

The readings for today’s liturgy continue to challenge our understanding and living of the resurrection. What will be our response?

- What causes me to turn away from God in sinfulness is...What helps me return to God is...
- Examples of how I have experienced the new Life of the resurrection through repentance and forgiveness are...
- I witness to God’s forgiveness of sinfulness when I...

About Liturgy: The Sacrament of Penance

Much is being written in the Catholic press these days about the demise of the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation – that too few are making use of this sacrament of healing. Even participation in the twice-a-year Advent and Lent Communal Penance Liturgies in our Deanery parishes is not always as well attended as they could be. Perhaps part of the problem lies in a rather narrow understanding of this sacrament – that it is about acknowledging sins. This is true, however, this is only one dimension of the sacrament. Far more important is that our seeking and receiving forgiveness, our firm resolve of repentance, and our doing some penance as an expression of our desire for

conversion are all opportunities for encounters with the risen Christ.

Like all liturgy, the Sacrament of Penance makes present the paschal mystery. Perhaps we focus too much on the dying aspect of this mystery (confession of sins) and not enough on the rising (encounter with Christ and the restoration of our relationship with God). Like all sacraments, the Rite of Reconciliation includes a proclamation of the Word, even when it is celebrated as a private confession. Perhaps a good practice would be to reflect on some New Testament passage on forgiveness for a significant time before going to confessions; perhaps this Sunday’s gospel would be a good choice since it reminds us so well of the connection of forgiveness and risen Life.

Caring Hands

Today we welcome **Linda Groobin** once again to speak on the Ministry of Caring Hands. She is extending an invitation to our parishioners to become involved in this wonderful program of outreach, support, and pastoral care. Please welcome here warmly see if there is an opportunity for you to become involved.

CROP Hunger Walk

The Annual CROP Hunger Walk takes place this afternoon from St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church on San Jose Avenue. Registration begins at 2:30 p.m. and the walk begins at 3:00 p.m. I hope you will join me for this event as we raise awareness of the world-wide situation of hunger for millions of our sisters and brothers.

Confirmation Congratulations

Yesterday at the Cathedral, our High School Students were confirmed. We

extend our heartfelt congratulations to them as they complete their Initiation through the Laying on of Hands and Anointing with Sacred Chrism:

Dane Abenoja, Brian Anyanwu, Jerrel Devera, Ken Douville, Shawn Dugao, Jonathan Francisco, Jeremy Hernandez, Joseph Lacanlale, Zach Leigh, Mary Lucido, Jasmin Malinas, Derrick Manalac, Paolo Mirano, William Necor, Ronald Novicio, Cameron Paran, Madison Stahl, Mary Gael Vocal.

Good Shepherd Sunday

Next Sunday, April 26th, The Fourth Sunday of Easter, also known as “Good Shepherd” Sunday, our adopted seminarian, **Mario Rizzo**, will be present to share with us his path to the priesthood. He will be honored by our Knights of Columbus who have supported him since he began his seminary studies. What a blessing he will be to us and to the Diocese!

The homilist that weekend is **Fr. George Griener, S.J.** so we are sure to be inspired and challenged by his homily.

And finally, the members of our Community Garden Ministry are holding a Plant Sale to benefit the needs of the garden. This will once again be a great weekend.

Liturgical Ministries Morning of Enrichment

Please make sure to join us for a wonderful morning of enrichment, inspiration, and education on Saturday, May 2nd, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 Noon. This is our Second Morning of Enrichment for all in Liturgical

Ministry: Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Ushers, Greeters, Sacristans, Altar Servers, Adult Acolytes, Altar Guild members, singers, Choir Directors, Organists, instrumentalists, Deacons and Presiders. Our keynote speaker is once again **Fr. John Kasper** and the breakout sessions will be led by myself and **Fr. Ron Schmit**. Come and be renewed in your various ministries. See the flyer in today’s bulletin.

There is no charge to attend and the morning is being offered to all in the Delta Deanery, from Bay Point to Byron.

Thank You

...to our faithful parishioners who arrived early last Saturday morning to clean and prepare the church for the weekend: **“Jun” Bajet, Reno Benasfre, Carole Miller, Rose Salamanca, Steve Rojek, and Jack Goncalves.**

...to our wonderful parishioners who clean and maintain the bathrooms in both the church and parish hall each week: **Gino Ramos, Robert Goncalves, Mary Ewing, Patricia Britton, and Harlan Young.**

CCISCO Night Walk Against Violence

Last Friday evening, the CCISCO Night Walk Against Violence took place from St. John’s Lutheran Church. We gathered in their parish hall at 6:30 p.m. for orientation and prayer and then walked to the intersection of Hillcrest and E. Tregallas Avenue.

Approximately 25 individuals from various congregations came together for the witness against violence in Antioch and throughout East County. Pamphlets were distributed to those who were willing to take them as well as inviting them to become involved with this

movement. At the conclusion of the witness, we returned to the church for an evaluation and closing prayer.

The next Night Walk takes place on Friday, May 8th at 6:30 p.m. from The Church of God Holy, at the intersection of A and E. 18th Streets, Antioch.