

For The Bulletin of March 18, 2018



THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

From Father Robert

The Fifth Sunday of Lent can be seen as a turning point in the Lenten Journey as we enter the final days of this season with less than two weeks left before we begin the Sacred Paschal Triduum. Once again, we will listen to the scripture passages from the A Cycle of readings as we have the Elect celebrating the Third Scrutiny during the 10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist.

First Reading - Ezekiel 37: 12 – 14

Ezekiel announces to the people of the covenant God's fourfold promise to them: the graves of the dead will be opened, those who have died will be brought to life, the people in exile will be brought back to their land, and the spirit of God will be given to them. The promise of restoration prefigures the promise of Christ for all those who believe in Him and sets up the Gospel story of the Raising of Lazarus from the dead. The promise of the Lord God is affirmed in signs and in words. "I have promised and I will do it, says the Lord."

Psalm 130 – The prayer of the psalmist is a supplication. The psalm was at one time known as the *Miserere*, which also included words from Psalm 51. Both psalms are a plea for the Lord's mercy. The psalmist calls on the Lord to be attentive to his plea believing that only the Lord is able to give him strength to withstand "the depths" in which he finds himself. The psalmist doesn't give any indication what this might be, or why he is in this state. The focus of his pleading is on the kindness of the Lord; no one else can raise him up.

Second Reading – Romans 8: 8 – 11

In Paul's theology of the body, the word "flesh" could mean two things: the physical body or that part of human nature that is prone to sinfulness, as in the ways of the flesh. The opposite of this is the way of the spirit, the way of goodness and right judgment. In today's reading he denounces the way of the flesh, though he doesn't give examples as he does in other cases. It is the Spirit of Jesus that overcomes the flesh and brings a new way of life to those who believe in Him.

Gospel – John 11: 1 – 45 The Story of the Raising of Lazarus draws us into the human grief of a family and of Jesus Himself. The story has more than one purpose and several layers of meaning. It is first a prelude to the Death and Resurrection experience of Jesus Himself. Second it includes another of John's "I am" statements, the declaration by Jesus of His identity, "I am the resurrection and the life." A third aspect of the story is Jesus' affirmation that those who believe in Him will also rise to new life; death will not sever the bonds of relationship between Jesus and

those He loves. Jesus brought comfort to Mary and Martha; His message also brings comfort to us.



Our Lenten Communal Penance Service will be celebrated on this Thursday, March 22nd, at 7:30 p.m. Fr. Vincent Scott, Retired Pastor Emeritus of Church of the Assumption, San Leandro, and Fr. Richard will be with me to share in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which will be celebrated in the context of Sung Evening Prayer.

Individual celebration of the sacrament takes place each Saturday from 2:45 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the Chapel of Reconciliation.



PALM SUNDAY

Saturday, March 24:

9:00 a.m. You are invited to join in the preparing of the Palm Fronds that will be blessed and distributed as a part of our Palm Sunday Liturgies by cutting, washing, drying, and bundling the palms. Please come to the kitchen in the parish hall and bring gloves and shears.

Vigil Liturgy, 4:00 p.m. *Blessing of Palms, Procession, Proclamation of the Passion, Holy Eucharist; the COLOR of the liturgies is RED! Please wear something RED to contribute to the spirit of our celebrations.*

Sunday, March 25: 8:00 a.m. and **10:30 a.m.** *Blessing of Palms, Procession, Proclamation of the Passion, Holy Eucharist*

Monday of Holy Week

March 26

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Tuesday of Holy Week

March 27

8:00 a.m. Liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion

Wednesday of Holy Week

March 28

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Holy Thursday

March 29

8:00 a.m. Sung Morning Prayer

7:30 p.m. Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper - *Presentation of the Holy Oils, Liturgy of the Word, Washing of Feet, Holy Eucharist, Procession to the Altar of Repose, Adoration until 10:00 p.m.*

Good Friday

March 30

8:00 a.m. Sung Morning Prayer

3:00 p.m. Solemn Commemoration of the Lord's Passion and Death - *Liturgy of the Word, Veneration of the Cross, Holy Communion*

7:00 p.m. Tenebrae - *Scriptures of the Passion and Veneration of the Cross.*

Holy Saturday

March 31

8:00 a.m. Sung Morning Prayer

7:30 p.m. The Great Vigil of Easter -
Lighting of the New Fire, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of Initiation, Renewal of Baptismal Promises, Liturgy of the Eucharist, followed by a welcome reception in the parish hall for those initiated.

Easter Day – THE FEAST OF THE RESURRECTION

April 1

8:00 a.m. and **10:30 a.m.**

Festive Celebrations of Holy Eucharist -
Procession, Liturgy of the Word, Renewal of Baptismal Promises, Holy Eucharist



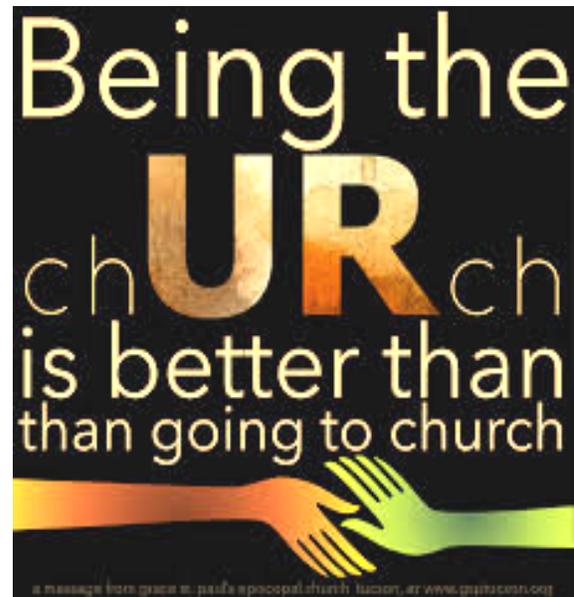
Easter Environment

You are invited to become a part of helping to create our Easter Environment! Each year, the environment is created by the members of our Art & Environment Committee to say “Easter!” for the entire seven weeks of the Easter Season. The panels of cloth, candles, Easter Lilies, blooming plants, and trees all contribute to creating and sustaining the joy and beauty of Easter. Contributions to the Easter Environment may be made either In Honor of someone or In Loving Memory of a family member or friend. Simply use the Easter Flower Envelope found on the credenza or in your next envelope packet and mark it accordingly

with your name, envelope number, and that your contribution is either In Honor of/In Memory of and the name of the person being remembered. All contributions will be listed in the bulletins of the Easter Season. Thank you for your support and helping create the Easter Garden.

Our Saturday Vigil Liturgy

Over the past several weeks, I have polled the members of the congregation who regularly attend the Saturday Vigil Liturgy regarding the time that it is celebrated. There was a strong sentiment that they wished the liturgy to continue to be celebrated at 4:00 p.m. rather than 5:00 p.m. Three separate polls were taken over a period of weeks and the overwhelming desire of the congregation is that the liturgy remain at 4:00 p.m. I am happy to affirm their decision as I am here to serve you and them and it is your parish. The liturgy will remain at 4:00 p.m.



Francis invites change, but we are the change

Mar 10, 2018

by [Joan Chittister](#)

There was a time in life when I wanted things done and wanted them done now. I still want things done now but over the course of the years, I discovered that, at least where the church is concerned, I was looking for action in the wrong places. As Sean Freyne, the Irish theologian and Scripture scholar, put it, "It's a mistake to think that a pope has the power to do anything." Translation: The right to reign as an autocrat, to take unilateral action about almost anything, does not come with the miter and crossed keys. Nor, for that matter, does it come with the capes and crosses of bishops.

Popes and bishops, I have come to realize, are the maintainers of the tradition of the church. When they move, it is commonly with one eye on the past — the point at which lies safe canonical territory. Only we are the real changers of the church.

It's the average layperson living out the faith in the temper of the times who shapes the future. It is the visionary teacher, the loving critic, the truth-telling prophet that moves the church from one age to another. It was those who had to negotiate the new economy who came to see fair interest on investments as the virtue of prudence rather than the sin of usury, for instance. It was those caught in abusive relationships who came to realize that divorce could be a more loving decision than a destructive family situation.

And yet, the manner in which popes and bishops move, the open ear they bring to the world, the heart they show,

and the love and leadership they model can make all the difference in the tone and effectiveness of the church.

Five years ago, for instance, we moved from one style of church to another. It happened quietly but it landed in the middle of the faithful like the Book of Revelation. Gone were the images of finger-waving popes, stories of theological investigations, and the public scoldings and excommunications of people who dared to question the ongoing value of old ways.

When Jorge Bergoglio, the newly elected Pope Francis, appeared on the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, he bowed to the people and asked for a blessing; the faithful roared their approval of a man who knew his own need for our help and direction.

When he told aristocratic bishops to "be shepherds with the smell of sheep" — to move among the people, to touch them, to serve them, to share their lives — episcopal palaces and high picket fences lost ecclesial favor. What the people wanted were bishops who would come out of their chanceries, walk with them and come to understand the difficulty of the path.

When Francis told priests to deal with abortion in confession, where all the struggles of humanity find solace and forgiveness, rather than treat it as the unforgivable sin, the church grew in understanding. When he said, "Who am I to judge" the spiritual quality of the gay community, the church became a church again. The fluidity of human nature and the great need for mercy and strength that come with life's most painful decisions became plain.

Francis, building on foundations laid by Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, opened hearts and doors to Cuba, regardless of the politics of it, and with

the Obama administration eased Cuba's isolation from the modern world. Francis has brought to the world's attention migrants fleeing war and oppressive economic situations; he has spoken up against slaughter in Southeast Asia and central Africa. He has said a definitive no to nuclear weapons and encouraged rethinking so-called just war.

Clearly, Francis is an invitation to change our stance in the world. We have a new model of what the church should look like to others as well as what we ourselves can hope for from it in our own lives. We begin to see the church as a sign of the love of God rather than the specter of the wrath of God.

And yet, at the same time, some things that must change clearly have not changed in these last five years. Instead, there is smoke without fire, commissions promised but not created, questions acceptable to ask, yes, but answers still scarce.

The very recognition of a problem, the modern world assumes, is the beginning of its solution. There is promise and possibility galore. But, in too many instances, if nothing happens, more and more people, disappointed, drift away from a drifting ship.

And so the married couples who lived through abuse, through marriages more toxic than life-giving, wait for the understanding that even though married again, they deserve the right to have the spiritual support the church offers as they attempt to make more loving marriages. They wait, but the declaration of inclusion in the church does not come.

A commission on the restoration of the female diaconate is formed, but the church itself is not included in the conversation, no public reports are ever given, and a very important and long-

lived part of Roman Catholic history goes silent again.

The leviathan of child abuse, the most glaring problem facing the church, continues to raise its hoary head. It reaches across the world and even up to the pope's own household. Unless or until even bishops and cardinals are suspended until charges are resolved, the taint on the integrity of the Vatican itself will continue to undermine the sincerity of the church's effort to dispel the venom. Meanwhile, an abuse commission itself was formed, allowed to lapse, is now formed again we're told, but all of that with little or no evidence of palpable response to the problem itself.

The call for women in official positions at higher echelons in the church is promised — but ignored. This means, of course, that the role of women has not shifted at all yet — despite their educational readiness, their life-time records of service, let alone the discipleship offered by their baptism. The effect is clear: Women have nothing to do with the theological commissions where decisions are made that affect the spiritual lives of their half of the church. But Francis says that there is nothing more that can be said about women because his predecessors have spoken.

The question is why this papacy appears to have stalled. Whether situations like this stem from Francis' own lack of commitment to them or as a result of the interminable resistance of the Curia to papal leadership is anybody's guess. But they do mark this papacy. They make for long-term distrust.

From where I stand, this papacy has made thinking possible again. It has embraced the idea that change is part of the process of living. But it has not given

some major issues significant direction. In cases like this, the promise of action and the absence of results, as the French say, "flatter only to deceive." They give false hope. As a result, in the end, the absence of action is even more disappointing than it would have been if hollow promises had never been made.

St. Paul warned the church about this kind of unclear leadership centuries ago. He writes in 1 Corinthians 14:8, "If the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle?"

It is a warning to a papacy that came full of hope and is deeply respected for it. As the Talmud says, "Those who risk nothing, risk much more."

[Joan Chittister is a Benedictine sister of Erie, Pennsylvania.]



...to our parishioner volunteers who arrive early each Saturday morning to clean and prepare both the church and parish hall for the weekend and the coming week: **Carole Miller, Mency Osborne, Angela Bueno, Al Cosce, Jack Goncalves, Heather Hatteroth, Cathy Romeo, Rose Salamanca.**

...to our parishioner volunteers who clean and maintain the bathrooms in both the church and parish hall: **Robert Goncalves, Sofie Zimmerman, Virginia Noack, Mary Ewing, Steve Rojek, Patricia Britton, and Harlan Young.**

...to **Mary Anne Douville** and **Faultless Cleaners** for all the dry cleaning, sewing and miscellaneous other tasks that are completed by her for the parish.

...to **Dilcia Aparacio** who does such an excellent job of washing, ironing, and caring for the Sacred Linens.

...to our Sacristans and Altar Guild who prepare the sanctuary for the celebration of Eucharist each week:

Peter Degl'Innocenti, Pam and Rich Confetti, Vincent Rodriguez, Harlan Young, Rowena Cayaban, Monika Kauer, Cynthia Enrique, Belen Farin, Nancy Santos and Rose Salamanca.

...to **our counting teams** who are here every week to count the weekly collections.

...to our volunteers who assisted in the parish office last week:

Melodye Costanza, Harlan Young, Yvette Young, Alicia Perez, Sharon Cissell, Joe Fanfa and Bev Iacona.

...to our St. Vincent de Paul and Mobile Mall volunteers who transported last week's donations: **Bob Carvalho and Barbara Jackson.**

...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Bob Carvalho, Dave Costanza, Vangie Parrilla, Kathy Augusta and Vince Augusta.**

...to our wonderful Parking Lot Security who keep watch over our vehicles during the weekend liturgies: **Don Benson, Steve Rojek and Bob Goncalves.**