

## For The Bulletin Of February 24, 2019



### *From Father Robert*

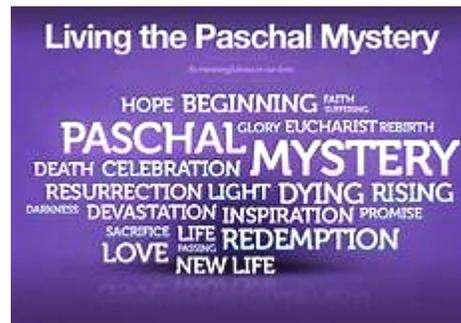
A classic device when children are called upon to share something is to have one divide it and the other choose which half is hers. This can happen with a piece of cake, cookie, pizza, or other food. But it can also happen with other items as well. Rarely does one child say to the other, “you can have it all.” The purpose of the device is to share something in an equitable manner. And perhaps this works for children. It sometimes works for adults as well.

The advice Jesus gives in today’s gospel couldn’t be more different. He is calling us to a higher standard. It’s as though we are being asked to divvy up the treat and instead we say, “You can have it all.” Even more, the way of sharing a cookie between children might assume they are friendly. But Jesus speaks here of “enemies.” This is an entirely different category. Jesus assumes His ancient listeners have enemies, and that is something that transcends culture and time. Enemies are not limited to the ancient world.

Christians are to love their enemies, blessing them and praying for them. The Christian standard is one higher than what we could expect from the world with its transactional view of

relationships. As Jesus Himself notes, it’s fairly easy to love those who love us, and to do good to those who do good to us. But it’s another entirely to love those who are our enemies, to pray for them and bless them.

We Christians are to be this way because God is this way. God is “kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.” Should we be any different? We are to be merciful as the Father is merciful. And here we see in our own time the example of mercy given to us by Francis, Bishop of Rome. It is said that the word “mercy” is the hermeneutical key to his papacy. It is the way to understand and make sense of his actions. Francis chose mercy because mercy is of God, and acting in this way demonstrates that we are followers of His Son, Jesus.



When faced with the extraordinary demands of the gospel outlined in today’s reading, one person said, “How can I do that? I’d end up with nothing?” Then we look to the example of Jesus Who enfleshed the words He preached. Jesus Himself loved His enemies and prayed for those who persecuted Him. In the Gospel of Luke we will hear Jesus form the cross pray for their forgiveness. What did He end up with? Nothing: He died on a cross. But of course we know the rest of the story. God raised Him from the dead. Only by Jesus giving Himself completely and without

reservation to the point of death is He ultimately raised up to glory with the Father. The words that form the conclusion of today's gospel are especially appropriate: "Forgive and you will be forgiven...for the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you." We forgive others not so much for their sake but for our own.

- In the first reading, David refuses to do harm to his enemy when he comes upon Saul unprotected. Where in your own life are you being called to choose peace and mercy over bitterness and revenge?
- In the second reading, St. Paul tells us that we will bear the image of the heavenly man, Jesus, just as we have born the image of the earthly man, Adam. How might we, as individuals and as a parish, conform ourselves more perfectly to the image of Christ, the One Who loves without counting the cost?
- How does your family and our parish follow Jesus' command to "bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you?"
- In the gospel, we are told "give, and gifts will be given to you." When have you experienced in your own life generosity begetting abundance?



The Memorial Funeral Liturgy for **Raymond Dupire** will be celebrated this coming Wednesday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, at 10:30 a.m. followed by a reception in the parish hall. Ray is the beloved husband of Lillian and the father of Kathy Augusta. If you are unable to join us for the liturgy, please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.



Please remember to return your dried palm fronds in preparation for Ash Wednesday. The dried palms will be burned in the fire sculpture on Shrove Tuesday, following the Morning Liturgy and then ground to become the ashes with which we will be marked at each of our liturgies on Ash Wednesday. Please place your dried palms in the box provided in the narthex.



### ***Ash Wednesday and The Beginning of Lent***

The Season of Lent begins on Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>. Our schedule of liturgies that day is as follows:

**8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes**

**12:00 Noon Liturgy of the Word and Imposition of Ashes**

**5:30 p.m. Liturgy of the Word and Imposition of Ashes**

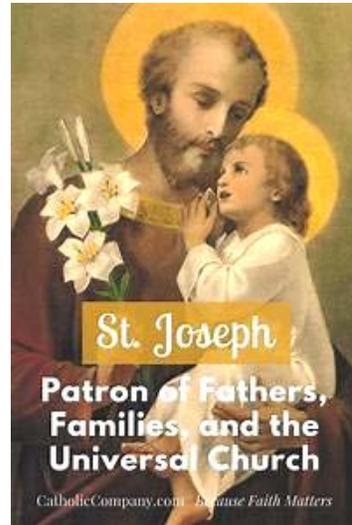
**7:30 p.m. Sung Evening Prayer and Imposition of Ashes**

The Ash Wednesday Collection has once again been designated for the support of our adopted parochial school of St. Peter Martyr, Pittsburg. Ash Wednesday is also a **Day of Fast and Abstinence**, meaning that anyone between the ages of 13 and 59 is obligated to take only one full meal, to abstain from meat and meat by-products, and to take only two lesser meals not equivalent to a full meal. Those over the age of 59 are not obliged to fast but are obliged to abstain from meat.

### ***Installation of the Lenten Environment***

You are invited to join us in preparing the church for Lent by joining the members of the Art & Environment Committee in removing the environment for Winter's Ordinary Time and

installing the environment for Ash Wednesday and the Season of Lent. We begin at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup> and will work through the morning, and if necessary, into the early afternoon to complete our work. Coffee and pastries are provided mid-morning and lunch if necessary. This is a wonderful way to develop your liturgical spirituality.



We are once again combining our celebration of St. Patrick's Day and St. Joseph's Day with a festive dinner on Saturday evening, March 16, 2019, immediately following the Saturday evening 4:00 p.m. Vigil Eucharist. Tickets will go on sale soon and you will not want to miss this unique and wonderful celebration that honors both our Irish and Italian heritage.

### ***E-mail Scam***

Please be aware of an ongoing phishing scam that involves emails purportedly from Father Robert. An actual sample is shown below. These are not from Father Robert and he is in no way associated with this email. Note the sender's email address is a gmail.com account. Father does not have a gmail.com account and would never ask you to email him so that he could ask you for a favor.

It appears that the sender is phishing for valid email addresses and if you respond, the sender will follow up with a request for some sort of monetary assistance. In at least one instance, a request was made for gift cards. It's truly unfortunate that cyber criminals will attempt to exploit the generous nature of our community.

There are common sense ways to avoid being scammed. If an e-mail contains an unusual request, contact the company (in this case, me or the parish office) directly. **Do not use any phone number provided in the e-mail or click on any links in the email.** In many, but not all cases, grammatical errors are present.

For more information on phishing scams and email security, you can google (or search for) "**RECOGNIZING PHISHING EMAILS.**" The FBI website address to file an online Internet crime complaint is: <https://www.ic3.gov>

Fr. Robert Rien <froberrien@gmail.com>  
To: [your email address]  
Feb 19 at 3:26 PM  
Hi, how are you doing?

I need a favor from you, email me as soon as you get this message.

God Bless,  
Fr. Robert Rien



### **COMMUNAL PENANCE SERVICES**

The Delta Deanery will be offering the Sacrament of Penance in each of the eight parishes in communal celebrations on the following dates:

Wednesday, March 20<sup>th</sup> - Immaculate Heart of Mary, Brentwood; 7:00 p.m.

Monday, March 25<sup>th</sup> - Holy Rosary, Antioch; 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, March 27<sup>th</sup> - St. Peter Martyr, Pittsburg; 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> - St. Anthony, Oakley; 7:00 p.m.

**Thursday, April 4<sup>th</sup> - St. Ignatius of Antioch, Antioch; 7:30 p.m.**

St. Anne Parish, Byron; 7:00 p.m.

Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup> - Church of the Good Shepherd, Pittsburg; 7:00 p.m.



This past Wednesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, Carolyn Krantz and I attended a special meeting at the Brentwood Community Center which was held by PICO CA (People Improving Communities

through Organizing) for clergy from all faiths concerning the “Broken System” in Contra Costa. It is the first of ten meetings to be held on the issues facing our area.

We were asked, “How do we create a space to build community?... How do we change the current system to create a county that belongs to everyone?” We talked about the three B’s- “Building, Bridging and Belonging.” “The economy is like a disassembled car on the factory floor. We have all the parts, but we can’t move until we put all the parts together.” We were encouraged to commit ourselves to become what we want to see, a county where everyone has a place and everyone has enough to live on. A tall order when we are faced with homelessness, immigration issues, the need for prison reform, and so many other concerns.

Much of this meeting was spent on the question of housing. Dr. Jennifer Martinez presented an historical overview of housing in the Bay Area. We learned that there is not much difference between the red-lining that occurred in the 70’s and the displacement that is occurring now. People with money are creating the displacement and destroying neighborhoods for economic gain. Ordinary people are suffering, especially people of color. Money is driving the train and calling it “progress”. While productivity is increasing exponentially, wages have flat lined. We all are working harder just to keep a roof over our heads and provide for our families.

The housing market has been “commodified”, that is, large corporations have bought up the land

and are selling it for huge profits. The Patriot Act cut off foreign investment in the market, but not in real estate. So much of the Bay Area is being bought by foreign investors. Much of San Francisco and Oakland has been bought out, and the displaced have come to Contra Costa and further east to own homes that they can afford.

A highlight of the meeting was a musical presentation by Michael Kim-Eubanks. He started with a familiar song, “This land is your land, this land is our land”, but then shifted the words to the fact that “This Land” was stolen from the Native Americans and built on the backs of slaves. So whose land is it really when it was built on death and struggle? He gave us all much to think about if we are really to own our history and stop commodifying human bodies, stop seeing humans as property.

Do we have the good sense to see the systems that are controlling us? Can we find a clearer way to see the world that Jesus imagined where all are brothers and sisters?

The leaders preached to us: “None of us are sheltered until we all are sheltered. None of us are filled until we all are filled. None of us are free until we all are free.” Sound a bit like the Gospel?

In future meetings we will learn more about the issues facing our area and decide on some “good sense” solutions which we can accomplish together. We will report back to you after each of the upcoming meetings.

