

## For The Bulletin Of April 28, 2019



### ***From Father Robert***

The Second Sunday of Easter is punctuated by a reading from St. John, the conclusion of that gospel. Of course, if we open our bibles we will see that there is another chapter (John 21) that follows this conclusion (John 20:30-31), but that chapter is usually referred to as an epilogue, as it was written later by another author. Indeed, simply reading the closing verses of today's gospel gives one the sense that the story is over, the gospel is complete. Thomas makes a Christological claim *par excellence*, addressing Jesus as "My Lord and my God!" With that, the gospel rightfully and elegantly comes to a close. How strange it is there is yet another chapter! Yes, that's the epilogue.

But in today's gospel reading Thomas encounters the risen Christ the week after the initial resurrection appearance. He has been called "doubting Thomas," even though the word "doubt" does not appear in the story. Still, it's clear Thomas was hesitant to believe. More than one preacher has likened Thomas's attitude to a "show me" skepticism. His belief is conditioned on physically inspecting the risen Christ. And, yet, the story does not say that when given the opportunity Thomas actually probed the nail marks or put his hand in Jesus' side. Instead, upon encountering the Risen Christ he immediately proclaims, "My

Lord and my God!" ...And the Word became Flesh" (John 1:1, 14) – is effectively proclaimed by a human being, Thomas. Then Jesus appropriately has the last word, and the gospel concludes with two verses from the author.

Moreover, it is significant that Roman historians tell us that the emperor Domitian gave himself the title "Dominus et Deus" (Lord and God). If the author of the Gospel of John knew about this imperial claim, he would be effectively undermining it by showing that Jesus is the true Lord and God. The Gospel of John has a profound Christology. The closing verses of Chapter 20 give us some indication as to why.



### ***Living The Paschal Mystery***

In the Fourth Gospel, knowledge of Jesus as the Son of God, the Word made flesh, is fundamental to being a disciple. In some ways, belief is as important as another commandment in the Gospel of John: love. This axis of belief and love informs our identity as disciples as well. In many ways it is a fine summation of the Christian life, bypassing other terms like "righteousness," "Trinity," and other theologically sophisticated words. Once we believe in the Son of God and love one another as He loves us, our life is complete. We then unfold this relationship day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year. Neither "belief" nor "love" know fulfillment. There is always more, there

is always a frontier, a horizon we never reach. As human beings we can never achieve perfect belief or perfect love. But the pursuit of both is lifelong. On this Second Sunday of Easter, we recall the simplicity yet profound message of the Gospel: believe and love.

Here are some questions to help you with further reflection and meditation as we begin the Second Week of the Easter Season:

- In today's first reading the apostles carry on the work of Jesus, performing signs and wonders as the Holy Spirit enables them. We are also called to carry on Jesus' work. How do you proclaim the good news of the resurrection in your everyday life?
- Jesus tells His disciples, "Peace be with you," three times in today's gospel. Where in your life are you in need of the peace of the Risen Lord?
- How do you offer peace to others through your words and actions?



***About Liturgy: Putting On Our "Mystagogues"***

In all three cycles of the Lectionary, the Second Sunday of Easter presents to us this gospel passage from John that

recalls Thomas's conversion from skeptical doubter to professor of faith. I can think of no other non-thematic Sunday that has the same gospel every year. What might this mean?

I think the key is Jesus' final statement: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." He's talking about us! This is a blessing specifically for us! None of the disciples who walked with Jesus are as blessed as we who have never seen Him face-to-face. This is the blessing of faith – to believe not with our eyes but with our heart. When you love a person completely and know that you are completely loved, everything looks different. The sky is bluer, the daylight clearer, even the people you meet on the street seem friendlier. Is it because the world has changed? No, you have changed! You've been given a new way of seeing so that you see all creation as God sees it – blessed. You've been given "mystagogues!"

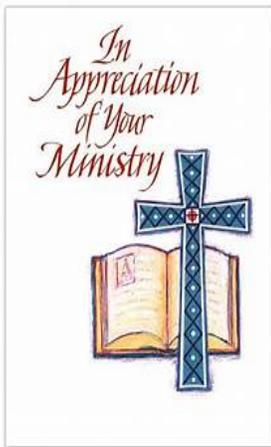
The church teaches that during the period of mystagogy, the newly baptized "derive a new perception of the faith, of the church, and of the world" out of their experience of the sacraments, and this new way of seeing "increases as it is lived" (RCIA 245). The neophytes, fresh from the font, can't help but see Christ everywhere, just as newlyweds can see and think of only their beloved. But for us who may not be so fresh in our faith, our "mystagogues" might have clouded, and we sound more like Thomas the skeptic than Thomas the believer.

The Easter Season is a time for all of us with the neophytes to train our eyes to see the world sacramentally. When we

put on our “mystagoggles” every meal is the supper of the Lord, every wound is the brand mark of Christ, and every moment of doubt is an invitation to cry in faith, “My Lord and my God!”



The Floral Arrangement at the Altar this weekend is placed to the Glory of God and In Honor of the Twenty-ninth Anniversary of Marriage of **Joe and Theresa Nelms** and In Loving Memory of **John Nelms**.



This past Friday evening, I was invited to join our friends from Antioch Church Family as they honored their beloved Pastor and our dear friend, **The Reverend Dr. Mario H. Howell**, on the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his ministry as well as celebrating his birthday. On behalf of our parish and myself, I presented Dr. Howell with the ***Distinguished Disciple Award*** which reads as follows:

## **The Distinguished Discipleship Award**

Is Presented To

**THE REVEREND DR. MARIO  
HOWELL**

In recognition of his 45 years in ministry  
in the Bay Area,  
30 of those years in pastoral ministry.  
He has served with distinction for the  
past 24 years as Senior Pastor of Antioch  
Church Family,  
a passionate community activist,  
a powerful voice for Social Justice,  
President of United Together,  
a Leader in Contra Costa Interfaith  
Supporting Community Organizing,  
The Longest-serving Pastor in Antioch,  
California,  
An outstanding disciple of Jesus Christ  
Through prayer, teaching, preaching,  
encouraging,  
Supporting, giving, and loving.

In recognition of your leadership,  
spirituality, dedication, and commitment  
to your faith family and our community,  
the Distinguished Discipleship Award is  
presented on the Occasion of your  
birthday and in recognition of your more  
than 45 years of service

By

The Reverend Dr. Robert K. Rien,  
Pastor  
St. Ignatius of Antioch Catholic  
Community  
Antioch, California  
26 April 2019

### ***First Quarter Financial Report***

The financial report for the first quarter of 2019 will be included with next week's bulletin. It contains important financial information as well as an update on the status of the Kitchen and Parish Hall Expansion Project.

### ***Assistance Request from CCIH***

A few weeks ago, Contra Costa Interfaith Housing (CCIH) requested our assistance for a family of five as they moved into their new apartment in Antioch. Your generous donations of linens, a couch, a table and chair set and cash were gratefully received. The family is still in need of 2 small chests of drawers. If you have a chest of drawers that you would like to donate, please contact Brian at 925.408.7735. The apartment is very small and large pieces will not fit.

### ***Special Report by Carolyn Krantz, Pastoral Associate for Social Justice***

The third meeting of the Contra Costa County Clergy Cohort met April 17<sup>th</sup> on the topic of Migration. The purpose of these meetings is to identify the issues in our area and to come together as people of faith to create change. When our connectivity is being pulled apart and the “air is toxic” to the values we hold as a faith community, it is important to be well informed about the issues. The hill we want to climb is bigger than us so we need this cohort to build our awareness and have a shared analysis of the problems so that we can create a network of relationships that can make a difference. We want to be a community that can build bridges over the gaps that separate us. We do not want to represent empire or become another Pharaoh, but to create community and be agents of change working together.

Eddie Carmona from PICO Sacramento set the tone by providing an historical overview of the broken immigration system. He reminded us that just as the Europeans killed the Native Americans and took their land, just as our economic system flourished on the backs of African slaves, so now the culture in this country is repeating these injustices with our treatment of immigrants. They are considered “other”. Our laws are set up to use immigrant labor for the profit of large corporations. The people in power are doing what they have always done, using others for profit and blaming the victims declaring one group less than the rest of us. The immigration laws have been set up to see newcomers as a threat to white Americans. Trade treaties have been created to rob Mexico of its corn devastating its farm economy and to provide labor for American interests without living-wage pay for workers. When we devastate economies of our southern neighbors, we increase the flow north. Our news outlets create duality (Us and Them) and our courts create a system to hold law over the care of people. Our southern neighbors often have a choice between death and starvation or to come to the U.S.

The workshop also provided a real life story of people in these situations. One person was from the Alameda Rapid Response Team who helps migrants that are caught in the immigration system. Contra Costa also has such a Team. The other was a woman whose life had been threatened many times by gangs in Honduras and who chose to travel in one of the caravans to come to the U.S. seeking safety. She had horror stories of what it was like being in detention. She came to give witness for those who died along the way.

They also gave testimony of the trauma of children separated from their parents. These little ones feel abandoned by their parents and are unable to understand the situation. Through this process we have created a generation of traumatized lost children under 18. Who knows what violence will be had from these lost souls when they become adults. Workshop leaders also pointed out that when one becomes a citizen, one often takes on the attitude of the culture, separating oneself from the people of the country of origin. They take on the attitude of the oppressor and renounce their own brothers and sisters.

How are we in the faith community showing up for these brothers and sisters? What can we do to effect humane systems? “We have to be hard on systems and soft on people”, said the trainers. We have to work to change inhumane systems and bring forgiveness to the perpetrators. We have to unite as people of faith to act on behalf of suffering people.



### *Easter Ashes*

The almost total destruction of Notre Dame in Paris saddens the hearts of people throughout the World. The destructive fire reminds us of how precious important, cultural, and sacred sites are to the well-being of humankind.

This tragic event reminds us of the importance of history to the on-going development of human cultures and civilization. While the bells of the great Cathedral are now silent, the sound they signify tolls loudly in our hearts.

France is known as a "secular" society. Yet, as the fire raged, thousands of Parisians gathered in the streets around the Cathedral to pray, sing, weep, and hope. As they cheered on the firefighters, the World's heart was touched as we longed to hope a treasure could be saved and preserved.

Within hours, the President of France announced a plan to rebuild the nearly destroyed eight-hundred-year-old Cathedral where Joan of Arc was beatified. He recognized Notre Dame as sacred to the World. The World is responding with enormous sums of funding, care, love and support. I cannot help but think that the fires burning from the heart of Notre Dame symbolized the Cathedral giving of itself as a plea to the peoples of the World to put out the fires of hate, division, fear, and prejudice. As the fires raged the World rediscovered its heart.

Up out of the ashes, the ancient Church will rise again as a reminder of past treasures and a longing for future hope. Notre Dame will rise again as a symbol of the World's longing for solidarity, peace, and mutual love. As the pride of France rises anew, the hope of the World is reborn. If there ever was an Interfaith moment, it is now. May the reborn Cathedral be a sacred sign of the goodwill and compassion of all people made new. As the Prayer for the Dedication of a Church prays "here may the victims of oppression find true

freedom." May we be liberated from every type of malice as the Cathedral is rebuilt. As we celebrate the Easter Season, we express our faith and hope that a new age is dawning when all people will live in peace and harmony.

Let the words French President Emmanuel Macron ring true in our lives:

"I believe profoundly that we will turn this tragedy into a moment to come together, to be reflective of what we were and what we have to be. We must be better than we were."

May the Cathedral of Our Lady hold us in the beauty and blessedness of her arms once again. A Blessed Easter and Passover to all of you.

Peacefully,  
Thomas P. Bonacci, C.P.

***Benedict's unfortunate letter ignores the facts on the Catholic sex abuse crisis***

Apr 15, 2019  
by [Thomas Reese](#)



*Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI sits in St. Peter's Basilica as he attends the ceremony marking the start of the Holy Year on Dec. 8, 2015, at the Vatican. (AP/Gregorio Borgia)*

The recent essay on clergy sexual abuse by Benedict XVI shows why it was such a good idea for him to resign as pope. In the letter released last week, he shows how out of touch he is with the causes of the abuse crisis.

Fundamentally, Benedict lives in a Platonic world of ideas where facts don't matter.

Most of the media attention since a German Catholic magazine published Benedict's 6,000-word statement has been focused on Benedict blaming the sex abuse crisis on the collapse of sexual standards in the 1960s..

Actually, he may have a point. Data presented by the 2004 John Jay report on clerical abuse showed that, both in the church and in America as a whole, the number of abuse cases began increasing in the mid-1960s and peaked in the 1970s. Something was happening, not just in the church but in the world.

On the other hand, sexual abuse was occurring prior to the 1960s. The church and America were just better at covering it up.

But Benedict also wants to blame sex abuse on contemporary moral theologians who challenged the church's traditional, natural law ethics, especially as it applied to sexual ethics. Contemporary moral theology is less rule-based and, rather, takes a more personalistic and relational approach. Challenging the church's opposition to birth control, as did most theologians, opened the floodgates to all sorts of sexual sins, including child abuse, in his view.

This is a fight Joseph Ratzinger has waged for most of his ecclesiastical career. While he was prefect of the Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith from 1981 to 2005, scores of Catholic theologians were fired from seminaries, reprimanded or silenced. Others practiced self-censorship in order to avoid the wrath of Rome.

It is flabbergasting to hear him in his letter complain that respect for due process kept him from dealing with this infestation. Too many scholars bear the scars of his inquisitional approach to dissent in the church. The congregation's procedures — where it acted as accuser, judge and jury — had no concept of contemporary ideas of due process.

It does not matter that no moral theologian can be found who condoned the sexual assault and rape of children. Facts don't matter.

It does not matter that abusers came not just from the ranks of liberals like Theodore McCarrick but also from conservatives like Marcial Maciel, the founder of the Legion of Christ.

He points to homosexual cliques in seminaries as if they opened the way for child abuse.

It does not matter that most of the priests who abused in the 1970s were products of an old seminary system that existed before Vatican II, which isolated seminarians from the very men and women with whom they would work and serve. Benedict still considers this the ideal way of preparing priests. Alas, he still wants to blame post-Vatican II theology for all the ills of the contemporary church.

Most importantly, he passes over in silence the truly scandalous failure of the hierarchy to remove abusive priests from ministry where they could abuse again and again. The crisis is not just about the abuse; it is also about the cover up.

Benedict's essay is especially sad because, as prefect of Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Ratzinger did more to deal with the abuse crisis than anyone else in Rome. I have always defended him against those who accused him of not caring about the crisis. He was not perfect, but he was far ahead of John Paul and other Vatican officials who were in denial and too slow to respond.

It was Ratzinger's disregard for due process that allowed him to take direct action. Once he recognized the scope of the abuse problem, he often dispensed with a trial after simply reading the priest's file. If the priest's guilt was obvious, he was dismissed from the clerical state. Ratzinger broke the logjam of cases by imposing what some canon lawyers felt was the equivalent of martial law. If he had not, it would have taken decades to clear cases through church courts.

His record doesn't excuse his choice to release his letter. Benedict would have done well to keep silent or to have shared his views only with Pope Francis. His message is being used by those who oppose Francis to show what a real pope thinks about sex abuse.

Francis, unlike some of his liberal supporters, does not want to muzzle Benedict. Francis has never been afraid of free discussion in the church. After all, if Francis were to resign and Cardinal Raymond Burke were elected

pope, I am sure every liberal would want to know what the retired pope thought about the new papacy.

There are at least three lessons the church should learn from this event.

First, you cannot muzzle former popes any more than you can muzzle theologians. All one can do is urge them to exercise prudence in what they say and then let the debate begin.

Second, the church needs to make clear that there is only one pope. A resigned pope should revert to his baptismal name and put aside the white cassock for a black one. He should not be called pope or pope emeritus. Ratzinger has a right to express his opinions, but they have no more magisterial weight than those of any other retired bishop.

Finally, since even dead popes are becoming rallying points for different factions in the church, we should stop canonizing popes so soon after their deaths, lest the canonization be politicized. Perhaps a good rule would be to delay consideration of canonization of a pope until after all the cardinals and bishops he appointed are dead.

The message I would like to see from Benedict is one forbidding his friends from crying "Santo subito" ("Make him a saint immediately") at his funeral. I would expect the same message from Francis.

[Jesuit Fr. Thomas Reese is a columnist for Religion News Service and author of *Inside the Vatican: The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church*.]

## ***Theologians concerned about newly engaged role of Benedict, pope emeritus***

Apr 12, 2019  
by [Joshua J. McElwee](#)



Retired Pope Benedict XVI greets cardinals before a consistory for the creation of new cardinals in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican in this Feb. 22, 2014, file photo. (CNS/Paul Haring)

**VATICAN CITY** — When Pope Benedict XVI shocked a meeting of cardinals Feb. 10, 2013, with news he would be renouncing the papacy at the end of that month, he promised that as the ex-pontiff he would retreat from the public eye and serve the Catholic Church "through a life dedicated to prayer."

But by the third anniversary of his resignation, Benedict was taking on a more active role.

First came a March 2016 interview with a Belgian theologian that focused on the question of God's mercy, just as Pope Francis was in the midst of celebrating an Extraordinary Jubilee Year, also focused on mercy.

In November 2016 came a book-length interview with German journalist Peter Seewald, where Benedict defended his 2005-13 papacy against criticism. "I do not see myself as a failure," he said in

the book, titled *Last Testament: In His Own Words*. "For eight years I carried out my work."

Now comes a letter blaming the continuing clergy abuse crisis on the sexual revolution and theological developments after the Second Vatican Council, weeks after Francis hosted a first-of-its-kind bishops' summit on abuse that focused instead on the endemic structural issues that have abetted cover-up in the church for decades.

What to make of this development of a pope emeritus who emerges from the shadows unannounced from time to time to offer his comments on current affairs, or even on issues being handled by his reigning successor?

A number of noted theologians and church historians are expressing serious concern that Benedict's choice to engage in such public action undermines Francis and plays into narratives splitting Catholics between two popes, one officially in power, and the other wielding influence as he writes from a small monastery in the Vatican Gardens.

"Benedict told us he was going to live a life of quiet contemplation," said Christopher Bellitto, a historian who has written extensively on centuries of popes. "He has not. A former pope should not be publishing or giving interviews."

Richard Gaillardetz, a theologian who focuses on the church's structures of authority, called the precedent being set by Benedict's latest letter "troubling."

The former pontiff, said the theologian, is offering "a controversial analysis of a

pressing pastoral and theological crisis, and a set of concrete pastoral remedies."

"These are actions only appropriate for one who actually holds a pastoral office," said Gaillardetz, a professor at Boston College.

"So now we have a situation in which a former pope is offering a parallel pastoral and theological assessment and a parallel pastoral and theological agenda that cannot help but be viewed as an alternative to the exercise pastoral leadership of the current and only bishop of Rome," he said.

Even the Vatican appears to be struggling to understand what to do with a former pope who wants to engage in public debate. As Benedict's latest letter appeared on several right-wing Catholic websites overnight April 10, the Holy See Press Office seemed unprepared, unable even to respond to questions about whether the text was authentic.

In fact it was Archbishop Georg Ganswein, Benedict's personal secretary, that confirmed for many journalists that the text was indeed from the former pontiff.

"The institution of the pope emeritus in the age of mass media and of social media must be regulated carefully," said Massimo Faggioli, an Italian church historian and theologian who teaches at Villanova University.

"This is something that must be done especially about the papal entourage," he said. "The Vatican is a Renaissance court and it is difficult enough to govern one court without having to deal with a 'shadow papal court' — which is what we have today."

Gaillardetz and Bellitto, a professor of history at Kean University in New Jersey, both said Benedict's decision to continue wearing white after his resignation and to call himself the "pope emeritus," instead of some other title such as the "emeritus bishop of Rome," have not helped make clear that there is only one pope at a time.

"These decisions have rather predictably fed deeply troubling 'two pope' theories," said Gaillardetz.

"The Vatican is a Renaissance court and it is difficult enough to govern one court without having to deal with a 'shadow papal court' — which is what we have today."

— Massimo Faggioli

Shortly after the release of Benedict's letter, one Italian journalist pointed to the official advice the Vatican gives to retired bishops about how to manage their relationships with their reigning diocesan prelates.

"The Bishop Emeritus will be careful not to interfere in any way, directly or indirectly, in the governance of the diocese," states *Apostolorum Successores*, the Congregation for Bishops latest directory for bishops, released in 2004.

"He will want to avoid every attitude and relationship that could even hint at some kind of parallel authority to that of the diocesan Bishop, with damaging consequences for the pastoral life and unity of the diocesan community," it continues.

"The Bishop Emeritus always carries out his activity in full agreement with the

diocesan Bishop and in deference to his authority," it states. "In this way all will understand clearly that the diocesan Bishop alone is the head of the diocese, responsible for its governance."

Or, as theologian Natalia Imperatori-Lee put it about Benedict: "It is crucial that he (and, perhaps more importantly those around him) practice a ministry of silence lest it appear that he wants to undermine the current, only, Bishop of Rome, who is Francis."

"To continue to speak on matters the pope is working vigorously to correct in the global, complex reality ... that is the church is to encourage dissent [and] to flirt with schism," said Imperatori-Lee, a professor at Manhattan College.

"Let the pope be the pope," she advised. "And let the pope emeritus pray for him."

[Joshua J. McElwee is NCR Vatican correspondent. His email address is [jmcelwee@ncronline.org](mailto:jmcelwee@ncronline.org)

### *A Letter From Our Friends At The Islamic Center of the East Bay*

Dear Fr. Rien, Fr. Tom Bonacci, and All Brothers and Sisters in Faith,

We, at the Islamic Center, are gravely shocked and saddened at the fire damage that occurred to the most historic and famous Notre Dame church in the world. 800-year sacred church that must have been visited by millions of people bore the foot-prints and memories of all of them. Fire may have damaged partially its structure, but it definitely could not blunt or burn the hope and zest of the devotees to rebuild it.

It is our hope and prayers that the historic church re-emerges from this inferno with new glory, touched by modern hands.

We fully share your sadness at this unfortunate happening.

Regards,  
Dr. Mohammad Chaudhry



On behalf of all of us, I wish to thank all those who do so much to help us each week, all year round with the various aspects of caring for our parish. There is no time that is more demanding than Holy Week and so we especially appreciate all the extra hours of help in so many ways. To those who created the environment for Holy Thursday and the Triduum: **Don Benson, Rich Confetti, Pablo and Norma Villegas, Tony and Claudia Gumina, Lorraine Lohmeier.** ...to those who cleaned the church and made sure it was ready for each liturgy and all our guests: **Mencey Osborne, Angela Bueno, Thelma and Reno Benasfre, Al Cosce, Alfred Madoshi, Jun Bajet, and Emilia Freking; Steve Rojek** who vacuumed all the pews, both the backs and the seat cushions. ...to those who cleaned and maintained the bathrooms, especially through the Triduum, Easter Day, and throughout the week: **Steve Rojek, Mary Ewing, Patricia Britton, Rose Salamanca.**

...to **Dilcia Aparicio** 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, Monika Kauer, Cynthia Enrique, 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:

**Frances Rojek, Mel Costanza, Maryann Peddicord, Estrella Rusk, Rowena Cayaban, Alicia Perez, Joe Fanfa, Bev Iacona and Paul Riofski.**

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

...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Dave Costanza (Lead), Carole Miller, Crispina Malonosan, Rowena Cayaban, Erlinda Titus and Estrella Rusk.**

...to our wonderful Parking Lot Security who keeps watch over our vehicles during Holy Week and the Easter weekend Liturgies: **Steve Rojek, Don Benson, Dave Simpson and our wonderful Knights of Columbus.**



Our experience of Holy Week, The Triduum, and Easter Day do not happen without the gifts, talents, abilities, and time of many people. On behalf of all of us, I would like to thank all those who planned and created all of the magnificent liturgies that were celebrated: Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Ushers, Greeters, The Altar Guild, Altar Servers, Adult Acolytes, the Art & Environment Committee and so many extra helpers: **Rich Confetti, Don Benson, Tom & Stevie Catchings, Pablo & Norma Villegas, Dorothy O'Connor, Theresa Glenn, Shelli Daviess, Carole Miller, Nancy DiMaggio, Patricia Britton, Estrella Rusk, Lorraine Lohmeier, Brenda Head, Tony & Claudia Gumina;** Music Ministry: **Don Pearson, The Cantors, The Parish Choir;** the Office Staff who created and printed all of the worship leaflets; our Knights of Columbus who provided parking lot security for all of the Holy Week Services and especially Easter Day: For the 8:00 Eucharist: **Ron Yarolimek, Antonio Cayaban, Charlie Mirano, Mike Manalac, Bill Barbanica, Steve Rojek, Jeff Monaghan, and Adam Hass,** For the 11:00 Eucharist: **Edgar Mataba, Tim Cox, Pat McConnell, Jerry Galvan, Bill Saunders, Dave Simpson, and Michael Bacchus;** all those who contributed to the Easter Environment; and to all those who attended each of our liturgies.

I also would like to express a personal Thank You to all those who sent Easter Cards, along with so many gifts and expressions of gratitude and appreciation for my presence as your Pastor. I sincerely appreciate all the expressions of support, affirmation, and love.



#### *Parish Tour To France*

I have begun to plan another tour in 2020 to Paris and the North of France, visiting its famous cathedrals, museums, historical sites, Normandy, and Lourdes. **Linda Grelli and Black Diamond Travel** are our travel consultants and are putting the tour together. Planning is in the initial stages so I don't have the exact itinerary and dates yet but will update you as the details become available. It will be either a 12 or 14 day trip, round trip from San Francisco, flying on United Air Lines. If you think you might be interested in joining us, please give the parish office a call and leave your contact information, name, phone number, etc. and we will be in touch to firm up the arrangements. Also, watch my Insert for updates and detailed information.



## **Sri Lanka**

The inhumane and unbelievable violence that has struck the island Nation of Sri Lanka is beyond comprehension. The minority Christian population of Sri Lanka has long been the object of violence and persecution. It seems feeble to say our thoughts and prayers are with those who suffered loss of life and limb. While we stand in solidarity with all those who are suffering from this continuous assault, we realize that more needs to be done. Once again, the time has come to break the stranglehold of violence and hate. Responding to this dreadful situation with more violence, only seems to justify the use of violence whenever disputes or misunderstandings arise. Hate must not be given legitimacy.

The Easter Sunday and on-going attacks invite us to consider one possible Christian response to such useless murder and mayhem. We offer to you this reflection from the viewpoint of a Christian peace-maker:

Easter is the celebration of the Risen Jesus who was unjustly crucified by the hostile State of Rome for standing up for the oppressed and marginalized. In the course of that cruel execution, Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them." Christians refuse to be defined by violence. As the powerful seek revenge, Christians seek to understand and forgive. We do so not as victims or

enablers of violence. We seek not to imitate what we abhor.

Christians are ultimately followers of Jesus in the practicalities of their lives. We see suffering and violence as opportunities to become like the One we call "Savior of the World." The Savior commanded us to love our enemies and do good to those who would hurt us. As such, Christians hold themselves to a standard of living exemplified by Jesus himself. By exemplifying what it means to be human, Christians challenge their enemies to be humane.

Christians are always tempted to adhere to the "standards of this World" by compromising what they believe for the sake of safety and security. In the last analysis, Christians proclaim the "Kingdom of God" on Earth. Jesus prayed, "May God's Kingdom come on Earth as it is in Heaven." Christians refuse to be defined by nationalisms, politics, governments, and those who think institutions and ways of believing are more important than human rights and human persons.

Like their Lord, Christians live in the freedom of the children of God refusing to be conquered by those who would kill them. In such horrific moments as now, Christians everywhere join with their Sisters and Brothers in Sri Lanka remembering the example of Jesus who lovingly declared, "No one takes my life, I freely give it."

We Christians now stand humbly with the Risen Lord as we reach out to all other human persons who seek justice, mercy, understanding, and peace. Realizing that we are all the Children of God, we say to those who hate, be

healed of the necessity to harm others.  
We say to those who harbor resentment,  
come to us and we will listen to you.  
We say to those who would hurt and kill  
us, we will not cease to love you. We  
will become, even in the killing fields,  
what we want the World to be.

With Heartbreak,  
Peacefully,

Thomas P. Bonacci, C.P.  
Interfaith Peace Center

