

After the Heart of Jesus ...

Then Jesus said to Thomas,
"Put your finger here and see my hands,
and bring your hand and put it into my side,
and do not be unbelieving, but believe."
Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!"
Jesus said to him,
"Have you come to believe because you have seen me?
Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."



Today's Gospel has us in the upper room as Thomas doubts the witness of his fellow disciples and then meets Christ who proclaims blessed are those who have not seen Him risen and yet believe.

Doubting is a natural part of the process of coming to deeper faith and we should never be ashamed or startled by our doubts. People question faith from various vantage points. Some question from doubt, others question from skepticism, while others question from cynicism. The questions may sound similar, but the response we make varies depending on the attitude of the questioner. Doubters trust the process and truly want to know the answer to their questions. We can give reasoned answers to the doubter, and they will be satisfied. Skeptics not only question the answer but they question the process. Cynics really don't care about an answer but usually want to criticize the system or mock the responder. Skeptics and cynics are rarely satisfied with an answer because they lack basic trust. The response to skeptics and cynics usually requires not reasoned answers but lots of prayer and a stance of love for the person. Prayer and love for one who is a skeptic or cynic may lead to a growing sense of trust. If trust is established then faith is possible.

We live within a culture that emphasizes skepticism and cynicism. Many people do not ask questions to receive an answer. Instead questions are asked in ways to make a point or to put someone else down. Our young people become very familiar with these destructive ways of dialogue and bring this attitude to questions of faith. Faith, more than most other areas of life, however, requires the capacity to trust and receive love. In this Easter season, the season of Great Faith, we will hear the stories of how faith spread in the early Church. May people in this age continue to come to a faith relationship with the Lord. May our patient love and generous prayers nurture the trust necessary to move hearts hardened by skepticism and cynicism to a place where faith is possible.

What beautiful celebrations we had for the Triduum and Easter Sunday! I continue to be grateful to God for the ways in which we give Him our thanks and praise in our liturgies. So many people commented on the powerful celebrations of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil, especially the reflections on the Way of the Cross. (That was me singing Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral.) It was great to see families coming together for these services, even in the midst of a winter storm. Fortunately the weather held for a clear (but cold) Easter. The crowds in Church were incredible, sometimes even out to the tower entrance. We may have to look to additional overflow Masses next year. Again, thank you to everyone who contributed and worked together to make our Easter weekend so wonderful.



This Sunday is called Divine Mercy Sunday. Our Lord's Mercy grants forgiveness of all sins and punishment on the Feast of Divine Mercy, mercy for even the most hardened sinners! Jesus told St. Faustina that this Feast of Mercy would be a very special day when "all the divine floodgates through which graces flow are opened". Our Lord made a great promise to all those souls who would go to Confession and then receive Him in Holy Communion on the Feast of His Mercy. Please consider joining us for devotions this Sunday, March 30, at 3:00 PM, for the Feast of Divine Mercy. Bishop Kaffer will be joining us in the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Chaplet of Divine Mercy, and Benediction. The sacrament of Penance will also be available. Please see the notice in this bulletin. With all those who look to Christ for mercy, may we exclaim,

Jesus, I trust in you!
Father John

Additional notes from the Pastor

There were so many areas of parish life I wanted to write about, I could not fit them all in my weekly column.

St. Joseph Table Kudos

I want to congratulate and thank everyone who contributed to a very successful St. Joseph Table on March 16. The McDonald Center looked fabulous, the food was excellent and plentiful, and the spirit of the volunteers and attendees was superb. What a wonderful way to reestablish our St. Joseph Table tradition at St. Walter! I commented to those who planned the dinner and volunteered that it was an excellent example of people who took ownership of an event without being possessive. Next year we will start serving after the 10:30 Mass so that more people can be fed and more money contributed to the worthy cause of the St. Vincent DePaul Society. Special thanks goes to Vince and Joan DiPiero for their leadership as coordinators of this year's event.

New Regulations for Parking around St. Walter Church

The City of Roselle recently revised the parking regulations for the streets around St. Walter Church, especially on Maple and Hill. Signs have been posted to indicate areas where parking is prohibited. Safety is the primary concern. The police have been issuing tickets to those who violate these no-parking areas. The parish did not request these changes, but we need to cooperate with these new regulations. It may mean a little more walking exercise before Mass, but normally there is plenty of parking in our parking lot. Please park there instead of in a no parking area.



Lenten Almsgiving Update

The final tally of contributions is not in, and donations are still being accepted to support the healing projects. The total so far is a little over \$10,000. It has been edifying to look through some of the donations that have come in. Someone donated two gold coins that have been preliminarily valued at \$850. One couple wrote, "We have been blessed with three safe deliveries and pray for a fourth one this summer. We would like to help to give that same blessing to four more babies. Please send our donation (of \$240) to Sucre, Bolivia for the safe deliveries of babies at Cristo de Las Americas Hospital." It costs \$60 for a delivery at our hospital there. What a thoughtful gift of gratitude!

St. Walter School children gave over \$1700 in sacrificial gifts. The Girl Scouts also gave a very generous donation in recognition of the parish's

support of their programs. The children wanted to share the gift of healing, too.

If you haven't yet returned your Lenten alms for the poor, please do so within the next two weeks. You may do so in either the first aid kit or in the special alms envelopes.

Garden Angels

It's time for the Garden Angels to meet to discuss the landscaping and planting plans for the Spring. All parishioners who are interested in helping with the outdoor beauty of our parish grounds, please come for a planning meeting on **Saturday, April 5, at 9:00 AM**, beginning at the Parish House. The heavy landscaping and lawn maintenance is contracted out, but the flowers and plants that adorn the entrances and circle drive are planted and cared for by parishioners.

Parish Pictorial Directory Committee Forming

This Fall, we will produce a pictorial directory of parish families and parish life. For those that like to plan ahead, pictures will be taken August 5-9 (for families with college students); Sept. 9-14, Sept. 16-20, and Sept. 30 – Oct. 4. Well before that, however, we need to plan the directory's contents and work to assure strong participation by families. If you are interested in helping with this project, please contact me at frjohnregan@sbcglobal.net. There will be an organizational meeting for this committee on **Tuesday, April 15, at 7:00 PM**, in the Parish House.

Stewardship is Up –



Shortfall remaining this Year

Thank you for all your efforts to return to the Lord in proportion to God's goodness to you! I am grateful that the overall response to Stewardship has increased our weekly and monthly contributions since our Stewardship campaign in October 2007. We have seen both an increase in the number of contributors and the amounts contributed. We have made or exceeded our goal four of the last five months. This is great news, especially for our future!

Unfortunately, we will still have a shortfall of about \$40,000 this year due to the first four months of the fiscal year. In addition, our snow removal costs were very high this winter because of the number of snow and ice storms. If you have the resources to help us balance this year's budget, please send your donation in an envelope marked "Balance the Budget Contribution."