

## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Parishioners:

Happy Easter! After the forty days of Lent, during which we prepared ourselves to renew our baptismal promises, we now celebrate the resurrection of Christ and the fact that we have been called to share in His victory over sin and death through our baptism. We also rejoice that nine adults in our RCIA program have now been received into full Communion with the Catholic Church. They are Christina DePhillip, Paul Handwork, Rachel Shumaker, Danielle Foss, John & Melissa Fort, Samantha Carter, Rachel Gill and Andrew James.

Different circumstances have led these individuals into our RCIA program. Six of them were baptized. Two were baptized Catholics who completed their initiation into the Church by receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. One of them was raised in another Christian community and wanted to convert to Catholicism.

As part of their preparation, I met with them individually to discuss their readiness to enter the Church and to see if they have any remaining questions. I always enjoy meeting with the people who have completed the RCIA program. Because of what they have learned from coming to the classes, they usually have a very good grasp of the beauty of the Catholic Church. They are attracted by the Holy Eucharist and the Mass.

Additionally, just about every convert I have spoken to down the years has mentioned the fact that they admire the Catholic Church for sticking to the teachings of the Lord regarding family life and morality. In short, they are attracted to the Catholic Church precisely because the Church continues to be Christ's life-giving and truth-bearing presence in the world. These newly initiated Catholics can teach all of us a great deal about being grateful for the Faith.

Today, most of us I hope will gather with our families for Easter Sunday dinner. But this should not be the end of our celebration. The Easter Season lasts fifty days reminding us that the Lenten call to repentance is topped off by an even longer period of rejoicing in the Lord's mercy on us poor sinners.

As a parish our celebration of the Season will continue at all our Masses for the next seven weeks. Additionally, on Saturday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, thirty-eight of our parish children will receive the Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament for the first time. This too, should be an occasion for all of us to rejoice! The next day, these same children will be leading us in our May Procession and Crowning, after the 10am Mass when we express our thanks that Jesus has given us His mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, to be our mother too. Our observance of the Easter Season will culminate the weekend of May 22 and 23<sup>rd</sup>. On Saturday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> Bishop Martin Holley will be here to confirm our candidates for Confirmation. Then that Sunday we will celebrate the Solemn Feast of Pentecost, which is rightfully called the birthday of the Church.

We have so much to celebrate, so many reasons to be joyful. In Christ's death and resurrection, as the old hymn puts it: "the strife is over, the battle done. The victory of life is won." Certainly, we all have our sufferings to endure. But as people of faith, *we know Who wins!* So celebrate Christ's victory of life. I pray that all of you will have a very happy and holy Easter Season.

With my prayers,

Fr. Conley