

From My Rectory Window...



Our Easter Cross in front of the Rectory has been so wind tossed and battered by the heavy rains these last few days that it's a true study in stability, even if the victorious white shroud looks like it's been knotted up to resemble a cord. With all the heavy rain I am sure that we will have a beautiful burst of springtime flowers and shrubs. While our Easter flowers are now a fond memory and the subject of many a photograph (I hope you looked at our gallery of pictures on the website to view the Holy Week Services etc.), the spiritual reality of Easter remains as we spend these fifty days reflecting on the many aspects of the Resurrection. I was reflecting on all the many confessions which were heard during Lent and especially during Holy Week. Confessions may be down in some places but NOT here in Whiting. This last Lent it really reminded me of the good old days when I was a kid. It really was marvelous so many of you availing yourselves of this wonderful Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Thank the good Lord, more than periodically we get to "catch big fish" as we confessors refer to those who have come back after a very long time. However, from an administrator's point of view, I am looking at our confessionals and frankly folks they are dated, and not so well suited to the needs of our folks who need more light, and room to move around, even with walkers and canes etc. I will put my head together with Rene Racancoj our director of maintenance and the lads who work for us and perhaps we can do a reasonable renovation of our confessionals. We will use whatever we receive as a rebate for the Annual Catholic Appeal (which is underway now, please be generous as your means allow). In this way we can fix them up and make them more user-friendly. I'll let you know what we come up with. It's important to stay on top of things. We are getting ready for our "Sacrament Season" with the youngsters who will be receiving Confirmation at the end of this month and First Holy Communion early in May. You can imagine as our society becomes increasingly secular and distracted, it has certainly taken a toll on the preparation of the young for Sacraments and the "regular living" of their daily Catholic life. What was considered a healthy activity for the young (Sports, School activities, other extracurricular activity etc.) has now become the be all and end all for some, who fit Sunday Mass in when they are not too busy. It is really sad to hear little ones tell me that "my parents said we are too busy or we are too tired to get to Mass because of whatever the reason". Can you imagine **that** being given as a rationale for non-attendance when we were young? It's just a matter of priorities as to what is more important? We all know the answers but frankly, we must just begin from square one as it were, as nothing can be taken for granted. I would like to encourage you to pray for these young ones who will be receiving Sacraments in this period and for their parents and families. Also, maybe it would be appropriate to begin right now to find out if anyone whom you know would like to be asked to come to Mass with you or perhaps might be interested in coming into the Catholic Church. There are surely folks out there who may be thinking about joining Christ's Church and I need you to be real missionaries. Believe me folks they are out there, they only need to be asked. Our "Cohort" which is our way of saying the four parishes (St. Monica and St. Aloysius in Jackson, and St. John's, Lakehurst) with which we dialogue on a regular basis in our area as Our Bishop has directed, has just met to discuss how we are doing in collaboration. St. John's in Lakehurst and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton have been discussing weekly what we can do to make the work of the Gospel more effective in our respective parishes and where we can do things together to support each other. So far, so good. It is really good to have Father Jim O'Neill (who grew up in our Parish), as our next-door neighbor as he certainly knows the score about this area. It's a good thing. Well I think that's enough for my pastoral musing for this week. Be well, thanks for your great generosity, and make sure that you talk up the **Faith**. I hope to begin forming a new RCIA class shortly.

A continued blessed Easter season!

Your Pastor and servant: Fr. Pat Papalia