

April 15, 2007

## After the Heart of Jesus ...

“He is Risen. He is Risen indeed.” Some may say that that was “So Last Week!”

In reality, though, we Catholics celebrate Easter in a special way for fifty days, until the Feast of Pentecost. During these days we hear the biblical stories of how meeting the Risen Christ changed people and how the first believers became Church, the community of believers who profess faith in Christ Crucified and Risen.



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. The Easter passages from the Acts of the Apostles tell how the earliest believers shared all things in common to provide for the needs of all and dedicated themselves to the teachings of those who knew Christ. We hear these stories not as history lessons of a people long ago living in a place we know not. They are intended to shape and form us as we move along the Easter journey of new life and discipleship. We, too, will have our doubts. What will we do with them? We, too, live within a Christian community called to share the Good News to the world in need of the savior. How will we do that today?

It’s easier to celebrate Lent as we anticipate a particular day on the calendar. It is more difficult to celebrate the Easter Season because it calls for a persistent desire to live as disciples of Christ for a lifetime and explore the ways we as Church carry forth the cause of Christ today.

After two years of faithful service to the people of St. Walter Church, Father Charles Joseph will be returning to India in May. He has been here “on loan” from his diocese in India, and we are so grateful for his presence here the last two years. Family concerns, especially the health of his mother, make his returning home the right choice for him. We will have a chance to honor and thank Father Charles after the 5:00 PM Mass on Saturday, May 12. Anticipating Father Charles’ departure, I have also asked Bishop Sartain and the diocesan priests’ personnel board to appoint at least one, preferably two, new priests to serve you at St. Walter Church. Please pray hard that we receive a favorable response

Our newest seminarian, Jason Stone, has moved in and begun helping with many things around the parish. I’ve asked him to introduce himself in this week’s bulletin. I am always hopeful that in having the men preparing for priesthood be a part of our parish that more younger and older men will see priesthood as a possibility for their own lives. If you are thinking of the possibility of priesthood, please do not hesitate to ask either Jason or myself your questions about answering the call to priesthood.

As we celebrate what it means to be Church in this Easter Season, we are also asked to reflect on what it means to be connected to the Church beyond the confines of St. Walter Parish as we are part of the Diocese of Joliet. The 2007 Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal begins this week. We will hear a message from Bishop Peter Sartain, our new bishop, and you will receive a letter from the Bishop and me asking for your support of the many outreach efforts the diocese makes to help strengthen the mission of Christ in our diocese. Our goal for this year’s appeal is \$117, 154. This goal is based on our Sunday offertory collection. St. Walter Parish has a strong tradition of going over goal, and I pray that this kind of generous and sacrificial support will continue into the future. Please make a pledge or gift reflecting a desire to support the important work of the diocesan Church.

Please consider joining us for devotions this Sunday, April 15, 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*