

# From the Pastor's Printer

That Was the Week that Is *or* This is the Week that Was

While winter has seemed to last about two years this year, oddly for me Lent has gone rather quickly. I wish I could claim that I am so spiritually mature that the rigors of Lent have been mastered so perfectly that time just flew. I think the truth is that it has been very busy in the parish and deadlines almost missed (or some maybe missed), make it seem to fly. Whatever my perception and reality, the fact is that the holiest week of the Church year has arrived, and at the end of this holiest week is the holiest day of the year, Easter.

When we celebrate a saving act, there is the meeting of three aspects of time: the past, the present and the future. Every Christian ritual is connected to the past. The past is where we get the context and the reason for celebration. For example, it is because of the descent of the Holy Spirit fifty days after Christ's resurrection that we celebrate Pentecost. Even in our private prayers, we might not mention a past act of God, but trust in His past acts bring us to pray now.

We celebrate in the present time, not simply what we are doing at this moment, but more significantly because we see the grace of God is active here and now, as well as in the past. For example, when someone is baptized, it is the same action and life of Christ imparted on the person as was bestowed upon the world at the time of Pentecost. It is not a remnant

of that grace or a diluted quality; it is as full and alive as ever. Also, we see that the implications of accepting God's grace require of us a response here and now. We do not see these acts as magic, where God sprinkles us with grace, and we go our merry but sinful way. For these celebrations to bear fruit, we – here and now – must chose to take into our hearts their spiritual reality and adhere our lives to it. In other words, the rites we celebrate are not simply mental recollections of times past, but a *remembering*, a putting together of past reality with the present reality through the grace of God. God is eternal and all time is present to Him.

The future is as much a part of the dynamic of the rites as well. All that occurred in the past was done by God so that humanity could have an eternal future. From the promise to Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars of heaven, to the promise of Christ that eternal life can be ours, we are always headed towards the eternal Kingdom. We celebrate the rites of this week not because we need a break from reality so we can play out past events. We celebrate not to simply have grace to get through another year of life. We celebrate these events so that we are drawn closer to the reality of the future by the work of God in these rites, and our acceptance of the grace they offer and the implications of that grace. In these celebrations we come to experience a "taste" of heaven, to share in the eternal life of God.

During this Holy Week, I invite you to listen carefully to the words you hear, speak and think upon, and to reflect upon the actions we perform in the liturgies of Palm Sunday, the Chrism Mass (on Tuesday evening at the cathedral at 7 pm), the Mass of the Lord's Supper, the Celebration of the Lord's Passion, and the Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday Mass. Reflect upon them. (You may want to choose a specific part of the liturgy, since trying to reflect upon the entire thing may take you to next Easter!) Some things you might ask yourself or discuss with someone: What strikes you about what is done or said in the readings or the prayers? What are the implications of this in your life? What might challenge you to live more fully in Christ? What might comfort you? What does this tell you about yourself or about God?

May you have a graced-filled journey through Calvary to the Risen Christ! — Fr. Jeff