

Dear Beloved in Jesus Christ,

What a blessing it was this past Sunday!! In spite of high winds and cold weather, almost every member of our beloved parish was present, and when all was accomplished about 100 people were gathered together, along with a cameraman from Channel 8. We also had 10 Fraternity brothers from Pi Kappa Phi who stood on the roof of the church as Roman soldiers.

What a spectacular picture of Antonio the donkey - where we can see Dominic and Alex pointing to the cross on Antonio's back - reminding us of that blessed Donkey who carried the Savior of the world in that first Palm Sunday Procession.

Then there is what I am now calling "The Four Mile Horse." A member of San Miguel's has a horse, but he has no trailer. Because he wanted so much to be with us for the Palm Sunday procession, this dear man rode his horse four miles to join us in Procession. This was a sacrificial gift, and one that will not be forgotten. To precious Diane, Cyndi's Godmother, and Diane's daughter and son-in-law we also give thanks. Antonio also had to come quite a distance!

To God be the glory, and a special thank you to all who made this Palm Sunday so memorable including the wonderful reception afterwards. Having official representatives from five churches was quite a witness, and we know that God will bless us with even more people next year to celebrate Cyndi's vision of "Unity in Jesus Christ", as we enter into the Holy City, Jerusalem, together with brothers and sisters in Christ. Thanks Cyndi for sharing the vision, and thanks to Al and his splendid and hard working committee that made all of this possible.

This is a very overwhelming week. On Monday night we had an excellent Holy Monday Mass at 7:00 P.M., and yesterday morning we were at St. Vincent's Cathedral for the "Mass of Collegiality" - Chrism Mass: the blessing of oils, renewal of clergy vows, concelebrated Mass, and the reception of the Fermentum - the consecrated host - that is placed in the chalice at the Maundy Thursday Mass. This symbol makes it clear that every Mass celebrated is an extension of the Mass celebrated by the Diocesan Bishop. Bp. Iker very generously included me in this Mass, along with Deacon Fred Hotz.

Tonight (Wednesday) we will have the Holy Wednesday Mass followed by a rehearsal for the Maundy Thursday Mass for all the Clergy, servers and musicians.



THE TRIDUUM (the three holies) includes Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Great Vigil of Easter.

7:00 P.M. Maundy Thursday Mass followed by rehearsal for Good Friday

12 Noon Stations of the Cross outside followed by Confessions

1 P.M. Stations of the Cross outside followed by Confessions

2 P.M. Stations of the Cross outside followed by Confessions

3 P.M. Closing Devotions in the Church followed by Hot Cross Buns in the Parish House

7:00 P.M. the "Proper" Liturgy of Good Friday

As I have been reading some of Fr. Acker's older letters and documents from the 1960's I have learned quite a few things:

He expected EVERYONE to attend the Main Liturgies of the Triduum, and very reluctantly changed the traditional hours for the Good Friday Liturgy to the evening due to the fact that schools and businesses were increasingly in session on Good Friday preventing people from attending church at the hours that Jesus hung upon the Cross, namely 12 Noon until 3 P.M. Therefore we will have spiritual opportunities at the traditional hours with the main Liturgy at night. I also discovered Fr. Acker's notes from 1961 explaining exactly how the Palm Sunday Blessing was to be done in the Parish House, and then processing down the sidewalk to the church. It appears that once he moved from the Rectory behind the Parish House to down the hill he began to process from the new Rectory. We also discovered that it was his expectation that the priest spend a great deal of time in the Confessional (with people on the other side of the screen.)

HOLY SATURDAY - At 10:00 A.M. there will be the Holy Saturday Liturgy which is a type of "Visitation to the Tomb" Liturgy.

At 6:00 P.M. we will have a Rehearsal for the Great Vigil for all servers and musicians and the Candidates for the Sacraments.

GREAT VIGIL - As was the case last year, you are stuck with having a Vicar who is a Bishop, so there will be Confirmations, Reaffirmation of Vows and also a First Holy Communion.

Receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation:

- Katelynn Lisette Hotz
- Constance Hope Fezzey
- Karen Miles Fezzey

Reaffirming Baptismal Vows

- Gary Lee Fezzey
- Emilia Hotz

Making her First Holy Communion

- Carleigh Grace Fezzey

The Easter Vigil Mass begins at 7:00 P.M. with the lighting of the Fire in the "courtyard" just outside the church doors. By the way, it is a long standing custom in the Church for people to take a small bell with them to ring at the time the Gloria is sung at the Great Vigil Mass; please feel free to do so. There will be a reception in the Parish House after the Great Vigil where a very special cake in honor of those being Confirmed, Renewing their Vows and making their First Holy Communion.

It is very common in the life of the church for people to take Easter Baskets to the church to be blessed. That could be done at the Holy Saturday Liturgy on Saturday morning, at the Great Vigil or on Easter Sunday.

We will also have an Easter Egg Hunt and a special Birthday Cake in the Parish House following the Easter Sunday Mass. Happy Birthday Sue!

If you want a review of all of these Liturgies and the customs and traditions that accompany them, please read that section in the book that Jo and I wrote: "To God be the Glory." Months ago we gave the book on CD to each person, but if you do not have one, please email Jo and she will get one for you.

This is a remarkable week, indeed, and in the process of walking with Jesus, may we recall as I said on Sunday, that the longest route is the one from the head to the heart.

May Jesus Christ be praised!

In His Holy Name,

The Rt. Rev'd Keith L. Ackerman, SSC, DD