



Stronica Proboszcza



The Pastor's Page

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Fourth Sunday of Lent – Laetare Sunday

Month of Saint Joseph

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Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!
Praised be Jesus Christ!

This weekend I will figuratively and literally speaking, *be in the pink!* Figuratively, because this weekend we have our Forty Hours of Eucharistic Adoration in our parish church. The Holy Eucharist is one of the greatest joys of my life! The Eucharist makes me happy! Celebrating the Mass is probably the thing I enjoy most about being a priest! I cannot put into words the joy that is caused by bringing the living presence of Christ Jesus into people's lives through celebrating the Holy Eucharist. So this Sunday when the whole parish is invited to honor and celebrate that divine presence, I just can't help myself but to feel *in the pink!* The celebration should be a grand one too, as guests will be present for this joyful event! I do hope you feel this same joyful enthusiasm about the Holy Eucharist!

Now, I said I would be in the pink both figuratively AND literally this weekend and I will because this is one of the only two occasions in the Church calendar when the celebrant of the Mass is instructed to wear pink or rather rose colored vestments. The other Sunday is the third Sunday of Advent. Both of these rose colored Sundays have special names in the liturgy. The rose Sunday we observed during Advent was called *Gaudete* Sunday. The one we are celebrating this Fourth Sunday of Lent is called *Laetare* Sunday.

Both of these names come from the first word of the Latin prayers assigned to the Masses of these Sundays and both words, *gaudete* and *laetare*, are imperative forms of the verb to rejoice or be happy. That means they are commands. *Be happy! Be joyful! Cheer up! Rejoice and shout for joy!* These are the Church's sentiments this day and there is so much to be happy about, even during Lent or perhaps even because of Lent! Christ's suffering and death was tragic, there's no refuting that fact but only IT could bring about the great joy of the Resurrection! The penance of Lent is not an end unto itself. No! It is directly ordered toward all the joy and gladness and celebration that Easter brings! The one MUST lead to the other! In spite of all the problems in this world, and there are many, there is also so much to be happy about. There is beauty and goodness all around us. Our task is to seek it out, celebrate it and don't forget SHARE IT with others. It's kind of difficult to be joyful all by yourself!

This Sunday in some parts of the Catholic world is also known as "Mothering Sunday." There was an ancient and indulgenced custom of visiting one's mother church or cathedral on this day. Small countryside chapels served as the weekly gathering places for Mass, but on this Sunday all would go with their offerings to the mother church of the parish, where they had been baptized.

In a natural evolution of this pilgrimage, children would also return home to spend the day with mother and parents, with "mothering cakes" and simnel cakes having been prepared especially for the occasion. A simnel cake is a light fruit cake with a toasted marzipan top. It is usually decorated with eleven ornamental candies to represent the true apostles that did not abandon our Lord. The name comes from the

Latin word *similia*, which means a fine flour, which the cakes are made from. It is a European Lenten delicacy only appropriate for this joyful Sunday of Lent when fasting would be unheard of!

Naturally, roses were the traditional flowers for the day, because rose was the color of the vestments and the decoration on the altar. After Mass, the roses were taken to mothers. One tradition presents Mothering Sunday as an honor to St. Anne, the Blessed Mother's mother, when children would "go a'mothering" and bring flowers, gifts, and sweets to their mother. Long before Anna Jarvis held her service to honor all mothers or Woodrow Wilson in 1914 proclaimed the second Sunday in May Mothers' Day, Christian folks were honoring mothers, spiritual and natural, and this mid-Lent Sunday had become a day of family reunion and festivity.

The name "Rose Sunday" comes from the papal blessing of the golden rose, a symbol of spiritual joy. The floral spray was blessed by the pope on the Fourth Sunday of Lent and sent to some notable person or institution to acknowledge and honor special service or loyalty. There is a small container of musk and balsam in the heart of the spray's principle rose. When visiting the shrine of the Black Madonna, Our Lady of Częstochowa at Jasna Góra in Poland, a golden rose from Pope John Paul II, blessed on this Fourth Sunday of Lent, can be seen hanging next to the Icon.

So this Sunday when you come to church look for the pink! You will also see flowers on our altar, something that has been lacking for the previous Sundays of Lent, and of course they are pink ones! Joyful songs during the Mass will also be part of our observance. And of course the most joyful element of the entire celebration will be the living Eucharistic presence of Christ Jesus Our Savior, on our altar, and in our tabernacle and in the procession around our church! Please make every effort to join in our special devotions this Sunday afternoon at 4:00 PM.

*Jeżu bądź zmną, Jeżu żyj we mnie,
Jeżu Twój jestem w życiu i przy śmierci.*

*O Jesus be with me, O Jesus live in me,
O Jesus I am Yours in Life and in death.*

The practice of forty hours of continuous devotion to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament originated in Milan, Italy about the year 1530. By 1550, both St. Philip Neri and St. Ignatius Loyola had also instituted this practice in their religious orders, namely the Oratorians and the Jesuits, especially for the reparation of sin. This devotion commemorates the forty hours Jesus was entombed. The purpose of the devotion is to nurture the love of the faithful for Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Three special dimensions have traditionally surrounded this devotion: the protection from evil and temptation; reparation for our own sins and for the Poor Souls in Purgatory; and deliverance from political, material, or spiritual calamities. During the adoration the faithful implore Our Lord to pour forth His abundant graces not only for themselves, but their neighbors, not only for their own personal needs, but for those of the world.

In our own country, St. John Neumann, the fourth bishop of Philadelphia, was a strong promoter of the Forty Hours Devotion. While the practice had already existed in individual churches throughout the city, as well as in other places in the country, no organized, cohesive diocesan schedule for it had ever before been attempted. St. John had a tremendous devotion to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and desired to foster such a spiritual life in his people.

Unfortunately at this time, a strong anti-Catholic sentiment plagued Philadelphia. During the Know Nothing riots of 1844, two churches were burned and another was saved simply by the threat of gunfire. Some priests, therefore, advised St. John that the introduction of the Forty Hours Devotion would only flame the hatred against Catholics and expose the Blessed Sacrament to desecration. St. John was left in a quandary.

A strange incident occurred which helped St. John decide. One night, he was working very late at his desk and fell asleep in his chair. The candle on the desk burnt down and charred some of the papers, but they were still readable. He awoke, surprised and thankful that a fire had not ignited. He fell on his knees to give thanks to God for protection, and heard His voice saying, "As the flames are burning here without consuming or injuring the writing, so shall I pour out my grace in the Blessed Sacrament without prejudice to My honor. Fear no profanation, therefore; hesitate no longer to carry out your design for my glory."

He introduced the practice of Forty Hours Devotion at the first diocesan synod in April, 1853, and the first devotions began at St. Philip Neri Parish, an appropriate place since that saint had initiated the devotion in the city of Rome. St. John Neumann himself, spent most of the three days in the church praying. No trouble ensued. He then introduced the program for the whole diocese, so that each parish would have Forty Hours Devotion during the course of the year. He composed a special booklet for the devotion and obtained special indulgences for the faithful attending them. The Forty Hours Devotion was so successful it spread to other dioceses. At the Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1866, the Forty Hours Devotion was approved for all dioceses of the United States.

The annual Forty Hours Devotion provides a wonderful opportunity for the spiritual growth of every Catholic and of the parish as a whole. In a world where temptation and evil abound, where devotion to the Mass and Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist have declined, where the practice of penance and confession have been forgotten, we need the Forty Hours Devotion more than ever!

**“I myself am the living bread come down from Heaven.
If anyone eats this bread, He shall live forever;
the bread I will give is my flesh for the life of the world”**

How to Make a Good Confession

I want to remind all our parishioners that Holy Mother Church expects each one of her children to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, that is go to **CONFESSION**, at the very least **ONCE** a year. It is very important that we prepare before going to the sacrament. Start by praying to the Holy Spirit to be able to know and remember your sins. Then ask the Holy Spirit to inflame your soul for the Sacrament by strengthening your trust in God's Mercy. **Confessions will be heard in our parish on Wednesday and Thursday April 10th and 11th at 1:00 PM in the afternoon and at 6:00 PM in the evening and on Saturday, April 13th at 3:00 PM in the afternoon. There are also Vicariate Penance Services on Thursday, April 4th at 7:00 PM at St. Roch Parish in Flatrock, on Monday, April 8th at 7:00 PM at Our Lady of the Angels Parish in Taylor and on Saturday, April 13th at St. Cyprian in Riverview at 12:00 noon. After this no more confessions are scheduled to be heard in our parish.** A very important part of the preparation for the sacrament is examining your conscience. We use the Ten Commandments.

#1. We are guilty of breaking the 1st commandment if we do not seek to love God with our whole heart and soul. This means God comes **FIRST!** Nothing is more important than my relationship with God and because God is first I am working hard at building that relationship. I speak to God daily in prayer. In my prayers I thank God for His blessings, I tell God I am sorry for my sins, I praise God for His greatness and I humbly ask Him for what I really need. When I take the 1st commandment seriously I do not follow horoscopes, visit psychics or practice superstitions. I believe God is fully in control! I am also not ashamed of my religion. I do not hide the fact that I am a Catholic and behave at all times in a way that publicly proclaims I am a believer!

#2. We are guilty of breaking the 2nd commandment when we use God's name carelessly and without respect, especially in cursing. When we take the second commandment seriously we do not swear or use profane language. When we speak we are always mindful that God Himself hears every word and we would not be ashamed that He does hear us.

#3. We are guilty of breaking the 3rd commandment when we make no time in our busy schedules to publicly worship God with others who also believe. Sunday is our Christian Sabbath Day of Rest. We take

time to think about God instead of the earthly business that occupies our thoughts all week long. The Church has been given the authority by Christ to demand of us that we participate in the Holy Mass at least once a week on the Sabbath. We have promised to be faithful in our baptismal vows. When we decide there are other things more important than Mass this Sunday, we have broken the 3rd commandment and seriously deceived ourselves. We also have a moral obligation to attend Mass on the Holy Days of Obligations. Mature and responsible Catholics are aware of these days. They go to Mass because they realize they need what it gives and they want to go. When they go to church they participate enthusiastically and pay close attention to the sacrifice which is being offered for their salvation at the altar! They are not late for Mass and they do not leave early because they treasure every moment with Our Lord in His House! We observe the 3rd commandment when we spend quality time with our family and loved ones this day.

#4. We are guilty of breaking the **4th commandment** when we forget about all the sacrifices our parents have made over the years for us and we are not thankful for these actions of love. When we take seriously the 4th commandment we make time to spend with our parents. We help them in their old age. We are patient with them. We are obedient to them when we are under their authority. Further, we recognize the respect we owe to those who have lawful authority over us.

#5. We are guilty of breaking the **5th commandment** when we do violence to another. We may defend ourselves or others when there is danger but we may not choose arbitrarily to do violence to others especially if we are angry with them. When we take the 5th commandment seriously we do not abuse alcohol or drugs. We do not mutilate our bodies especially through sterilization or take human life through abortion. We never encourage others in these areas. Further we do not hate others or wish evil upon them!

#6. We are guilty of breaking the **6th commandment** when we have not been faithful to marriage vows in action or in thought. When we take the 6th commandment seriously we do not practice artificial contraception because we understand fully the meaning of sexuality. We are not sexually active with another person before we have committed ourselves to that person through the sacrament of Holy Matrimony. We are not tempted by pornography because we recognize the dignity of the human person and refuse to denigrate another human being by lusting after them, even if they are unaware of their own human dignity. We preserve our own dignity as a human being by dressing ourselves in a modest way and do not tempt others who are of a weaker moral character.

#7. We are guilty of breaking the **7th commandment** when we take anything from anyone that does not rightfully belong to us. When we take the 7th commandment seriously we give a full day's work for the pay we receive. We do not waste time in the workplace. We do not short change those who work for us. We do not gamble excessively so as our family is not provided for materially. We realize our obligation to share our excess with the poor.

#8. We are guilty of breaking the **8th commandment** when we lie, when we gossip about others or speak uncharitably about them behind their backs. When we take the 8th commandment seriously we do not destroy another person's good name. We do not reveal confidential information and we are not two-faced.

#9. We are guilty of breaking the **9th commandment** when we are jealous of another's spouse or their family. We do not dream about or lust after that spouse. We do not allow our conscience to be formed by entertainment which does not reflect Catholic moral values.

#10. We are guilty of breaking the **10th commandment** when we obsess over all the things others have that we do not have and overlook the special blessings that God has given us and the fact that we are not lacking in the necessities of life. When we take the 10th commandment seriously we realize that it is not things that can sincerely make us happy, but rather people and our right relationship with them. We realize that all relationships are built on the relationship we have with God Almighty and we are committed to building that all important relationship, which is by the way Commandment #1.

Here's a timely reminder for the Holy Season of Lent taken from a holy card distributed during a parish mission conducted by the Franciscan Fathers at a Catholic Church here in the metro Detroit area in 1963!

Christians, Only One Thing is Necessary!

SAVE YOUR SOUL!

1. Receive regularly the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist.
2. Say your morning and evening prayers. Make acts of Faith, Hope and Charity every day and night, before retiring examine your Conscience and make an act of Contrition.
3. Attend Mass on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
4. If there exist any Church Societies in your parish, join at least one of them.
5. It is an obligation binding under sin to contribute to the support of the Church.
6. You are obliged to avoid the occasion of sin; an occasion of sin is any person, place or thing which will likely lead you into sin.
7. Practice Daily Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary; pray to her particularly for the grace of a Happy Death.
8. Remember always: Death – Judgment – Heaven – Hell, and you will persevere unto the end.