

ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – APRIL 14, 2019

Dear Families and Parishioners,

Passion Sunday, Holy Week and finally Resurrection Sunday capture our attention. Spiritual **signs** abound in these eight days. Jesus often pointed to the **signs** he gave and the **signs** nature gave as he walked this world. Some saw the **signs** and acted; some missed the **signs** and fell asleep.

Tuesday all the priests of the Diocese will gather to celebrate the Chrism Mass at the Cathedral. At this Mass all the priests are asked to renew their commitment to service and join the Bishop as he blesses the Holy Oils. These Holy Oils are used for the Sacrament of the Sick, for Baptism, and for Confirmation. These Oils are a **sign** to us. God anoints us with the balm of his presence and his strengthening and healing hands.

Tuesday evening St. Joseph Parish will celebrate a **Communal Penance Service**. This is the Sacrament of “I’m Sorry”. The sacrament is principally a **sign** of God’s mercy. God recognizes the human condition and in the process of growing we stumble. He picks us up by the hand, brushes off our dirt and gets us walking again upward on the path to the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Communal Penance Service is uplifting because the Lord picks us up and does not crush us down. In visiting the priest during the service, you are enjoined to say one or two items of fault or deficiencies but not in a way that humiliates you. God knows the details and the appearance before the priest is to hear the consoling words of the Lord: “I absolve you from all of your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

If you have been away from the Sacrament of Confession for a long time, there is no need to say how long but only I am here to receive the Lord’s forgiveness and helping hand to uplift me. Fr. Pfeiffer, Fr. Lang, and I will conduct the Communal Penance Service.

Holy Thursday is the institution of the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament. It is the Pre-eminent Sacrament because it not only bonds the Lord to us but it is the Lord entering us under the form of food. Come and celebrate the Holy Thursday Mass at 7:00 pm. The **Good Friday** Services including the Stations of the Cross and the pre-sanctified Mass remind us that Jesus accepted even human death for our sake.

Finally, **Holy Saturday** evening arrives and we cry out “The Lord has Risen!” A new life has begun, the life of resurrection and the full emergence of the Kingdom of Heaven. God is giving us plenty of **signs** during these eight days. May our eyes be wide open.

Fr. Tom Acker, S.J
April 14, 2019