

Dear Greeters,

Fourth Sunday of Lent a reflection
By Margaret Lima, Celebration Publications

Being a novice quilter, I am drawn to the creative handiwork, especially of handmade quilts with their intricate patterns and countless stitches that help the flat pieces of material come alive. Each single stitch is meaningless by itself, but together with the thousands of others, creates a beautiful work of art.

Traditionally, the Fourth Sunday of Lent has been known as Laetare Sunday, taken from the entrance antiphon which tells us to rejoice. We're halfway through our days of Lenten penitence. Pink or rose-colored vestments and maybe even flowers are meant to set the tone, encouraging us to review and continue our Lenten program of prayer and discipline.

But, the mood of the first reading and responsorial psalm does not echo that of rejoicing. The last chapter of 2 Chronicles contains a meditation on God's action in the history of Israel, a summary of the kingdom of Judah from the ninth to the sixth centuries B.C.E. The people failed God and ridiculed the prophets. The Babylonian captivity was their punishment, and it ended under King Cyrus of Persia. In spite of wonderful achievements, the overall record is sad. The chronicler sums it up: "They mocked the messengers of God, despised his warnings and scoffed at his prophets, until the anger of the Lord against his people was so inflamed that there was no remedy" (36:16).

And then the Israelites had to watch helplessly as the king of the Chaldeans had the young as well as the old and decrepit all killed. They witnessed the entire city set on fire and their precious objects destroyed. Those who escaped the sword were taken to Babylon, where they "sat and wept, remembering Zion" (Psalm 137:6). This could very well be the chronicle of our present day with the many wars, famines, refugee and migrant movement around the world. How can we again be joyous?

Paul, in the letter to the Ephesians, brings us back to joy and gives us reason to rejoice. God is rich in mercy. Because of our Creator's great love for us, God brought us to life with Christ when we were dead in sin. We were dead — dead in sin, dead with insensitivity and injustice, dead in wars and famine, dead in hate — and now we have been brought to life again in Christ Jesus, who is the ultimate kindness of our God. We have been saved by a favor, a grace, a mercy beyond telling or understanding. God's great gift of salvation is offered as gift. We have reason to rejoice. We are reminded that we are truly God's handiwork, God's work of art, a work of masterful creativity.

As God's handiwork, all of us are created in Christ to lead the life of good deeds which God prepared for us in advance. We are brought to life in Christ, no

longer dead in sin. Truly a reason to rejoice! As receivers of God's free gift of salvation through faith, it is now time to get on with the good deeds, being useful, working to bring about the reign of God.

Jesus tells Nicodemus and us that this is the time for decision. Are we going to live according to the light that came into the world or stay in the darkness and shadows of being noncommittal? Can we look with open eyes at the reality of our personal sin and the evil of the world around us? Can we challenge evil and darkness we see around us rather than being complacent and passive? We can do this, for we are God's handiwork "created to rejoice in Christ Jesus and to lead the life of good deeds."

At this halfway point in Lent, we pray for the grace to see more clearly, understand more deeply, and live more joyfully and faithfully in the light. We join our prayers in a special way with the elect, the men and women who are in the initiation process. Together, we come before God, hands outstretched, asking to have our hungers satisfied, our yearnings fulfilled. We ask God to give us what we need to be a true reflection of divine handiwork.

Some Information

- Attached is the Greeter Schedule from March through May 2018. This schedule takes us from Lent, through Easter, Holy Week Pentecost to the Feast of Holy Trinity. You can find this schedule on our Website at www.steseton.com.
- Fr. Ken Simpson will lead our Lenten Mission. The Mission will take place on Monday, February 26th, Tuesday, February 27th and Wednesday, February 28th.
- Our Parish Lenten Reconciliation is Sunday, March 18 at 7pm, the Fifth Sunday of Lent.
- Holy Week begins Palm Sunday March 25th and includes Holy Thursday, (7PM) Good Friday, (3PM & 7PM) and the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night which begins at (7:30PM) Sign up sheets are on the Counter in the Narthex. So, if you are not normally scheduled during April, we could use help at all of our Easter liturgies.
- **On Holy Thursday, Fr. Corcoran will wash the feet of 12 people in our parish. Like last year we will need Greeters to place 12 folding chairs in the sanctuary during the Gospel and then remove those same twelve chairs after the washing of the feet is concluded. (We also take up a collection)**
- Easter Sunday is April 1st (No April Fool) our regular Mass Schedule. We will need help at all of our Easter Masses.

Once again we thank you for all you do and for all the ways you make our parish such a welcoming parish.

With much appreciation and warm wishes to each of you for a blessed and Happy Easter! Claudia Nolan

