

From the Deacon's Desk

Easter Sunday:

The staff and I pray that joy-filled hope, unexpected graces, new life and profound possibilities be your blessings this year, beginning this Easter. May God's grace be felt in your homes as you begin this 50-day season of hope and joy!

Congrats to our new Catholics!

Congratulations to Scott Smith who was baptized at the Easter Vigil, and Kristen Smith who completed her sacraments of initiation begun at her baptism. We as a community of faith are blessed to have you join us our parish family!

Praise the Lord: Ordination to Priesthood

I received a phone call from Bishop Cistone last week and his formal letter calling me to priesthood this June. More information will follow but he mentioned that I could share this information with you. Unfortunately, I will most likely be moved to another parish due to the priest shortage, and saying goodbye is always difficult, but the Lord has promised to bless the work we all do with hope and new life.

First Communion Crosses.

Thanks to Bill Morey who made some beautiful handmade wooden Crosses for our first communion and confirmation children. They truly are works of art and reflect his creativity in sharing his faith with those around us.

Alpha Next Week: How does God guide us?

Talk summary:

- In life, we all face decisions, big and small. We are increasingly faced with a vast array of choices and making decisions can be hard. We all need guidance.
- We are not alone in this life – there is a God who desires a relationship with us and who also communicates with us.
- It's not always easy to hear God, and sometimes we think we know best, but God's plan is bigger than our mistakes and, in everything, God works for good.

- God has a good plan and a purpose for our lives and it is possible to discern God's will (his guidance) through various ways: Commanding Scripture (Bible), Compelling Spirit (Holy Spirit), Counsel of the Saints (Church/Christian community), Common Sense (Reason), Circumstantial Signs (Providence of God).
- If you walk in this relationship with God, reading (*Commanding Scripture*), listening (*Compelling Spirit*), talking (*Counsel of the Saints*), thinking (*Common Sense*), watching (*Circumstantial Signs*), your life will make a difference. You will have a far bigger impact than probably you will ever realise in this life.

Gospel Today:

A lifetime ago when I was in the seminary, we were given a reflection on retreat, and I've kept it all these years. I like to share some of it now as we celebrate the glorious resurrection of Christ.

One of the best Easter greetings we can offer another is to say: "I hope you discover empty tombs all the days of your life." As Christians, we should hope to enter other people's lives in such a way that they are touched and lifted, rescued and freed from whatever is holding them back from life.

When we are born we are not automatically "alive." Having been born does not guarantee full life. It guarantees only that we have begun the process of either coming alive or being entombed. Any person with eyes open to the world can recognize how many dead men and women there are walking around. The tomb is a very definite threat in this life. We either need to be rescued from it, or, if we've been fortunate enough to escape it so far, to remain free from its encasement. The most painful experience for any person is to be trapped in the tomb, from which only love can free them.

Our news stories are filled every day with the tragic tales of the desperate efforts people take to kill the pain of being entrapped in a tomb infected by non-love, rejection, indifference, intolerance, and hatred. They don't have to wear the linen cloths of a mummy to show that they are entombed. Anybody who truly knows them recognizes the fact.

Jesus became one of us to show us how to go about raising people from whatever tomb they find themselves in. God reached humanity in a unique way through Jesus, and through our assistance, God continues to raise people from the dead. God calls us to be a lover of others, and commissions us to be ambassadors and witnesses of his love. We are sent to free others from their tombs. At the end of our lives, we will be asked how successfully we fulfilled the challenge. God will ask us: "How many people did you raise from the dead? How many people did you set free?"

May you discover empty tombs all the days of your life! May you discover your own empty tomb; the tomb from which you have been rescued, or the one that you have been fortunate enough to be freed from. May you discover the empty tombs of others you have freed. May you discover empty tombs your whole life through.