



THE BETHLEHEM

Hebrew for "House of Bread"

April, 2024

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RESURRECTIVE POWER FOR ALL OF US!



Eastertide marks the holiest time for Christians throughout the world. It is a festive shout of Good News that in Christ, God has overcome the powers of sin, disease, and death, freeing us to live with assurance of eternal life and abundant life in the here and now. Resurrection is all around us in many ways, yet in challenging times there are those that question and doubt about Christ's resurrection and what it means for all of us! We do not always choose to look within the spiritual lens to realize what is right in front of us constantly if we just recognize it.

There are those that celebrate this Easter season still within the tomb themselves. There are those that doubt or can't believe and end up stuck inside the catacombs of despair, where they are caught in darkness, death, and decay. We know the tombs that are all around us where people are engulfed in dark shadows and encased within the walls of selfishness and indifference. Being so self-absorbed and egocentric can enclose us in a hermetically sealed crypt of depression, loneliness, anxiety, insecurity, suffering, and pain. Lately, the world around us seems to exist in such an abyss where many end up lashing out in anger, war, and violence. Others keep silent, hiding in fear and misery, and end up being the living dead among us.

It is our choice how to perceive, serve, and live in the resurrection. As Christians, every Sunday we make a choice to gather for worship, which is Resurrection Sunday, a principal feast for the faithful. All believers are rising from the dead in a new and risen life. It is the belief that Jesus came back to life three days after he died on the cross and that the disciples became resurrected themselves when they later witnessed his resurrected appearance and Jesus gave them the message of victory and hope. No matter the outer issues of life, our Lord alone has the power to remove the stones and open the tombs. Only the risen Christ can open the way of a transformed life and a renewed world.

Most of all, resurrection means to have a new relationship with God the Father in the full forgiveness of sins through what Christ did for us. Resurrection means healing and renewal for us to live out of the tombs. Through resurrection, God wants us to be instruments of healing, reconciliation, and peace. After our Lord had risen and ascended, He sent the promised Holy Spirit in a new way of filling them up to continue Christ's work on earth. This means that Jesus' earthly ministry continues today through His people, in whom God dwells within us by the Holy Spirit.

Our resurrective ministries within Blessed Sacrament is witnessed daily that includes prayers and actions for justice and peace, reconciliation, and healing and to do all we can to encourage the Other because we know what the risen Christ has done for us. Jesus lives, and because of the Holy Spirit, Jesus lives in us! No matter the outer circumstances, we can be spiritually tenacious through our difficult journey and knowing that the resurrective power is real. It is with Christ that we can do all things through him who strengthens us.

May we all embrace what Eastertide is truly all about and for us to live in such a way as to be the risen Christ to all by choosing to follow our Baptismal Covenant, choosing to make each day count for Jesus, and for us choosing to live in such gratitude for what Christ did for us, that we express it and share it with others. This is what the Church is all about. This is what a resurrected community is all about in supporting and loving one another as Christ loves us. For Christ's Resurrection is OUR Resurrection!! AMEN.

Charlie Ortiz Testimony

A Redemption Story at Blessed Sacrament

On Sunday, March 3, Blessed Sacrament welcomed Charlie Ortiz who shared with us his Redemption Story from addiction. After having been raised in an upper middle class family, Charley fell into drug addiction and eventually ended up on the streets. At one time he had become very ill and ended up in the hospital for 33 days being intubated for five days. Following his discharge, he fell back into his addiction.

Charlie first came in contact with Blessed Sacrament as he huddled at the front door in a rain storm soaked, freezing, and looking for a place to shelter having just been kicked out of the neighboring Starbucks. At this time, Charlie had been homeless for 2 years in our immediate area. Fr. Barrett and the staff welcomed him into Blessed Sacrament, gave him food, warmth, and encouraged him to get into treatment. He was thankful for the help he received at Blessed Sacrament but "didn't want to hear anything about Treatment."

Eventually he did find his way to a Christian rehab center (River Edge Ranch) in the high desert. Charlie spent 18 months there and was released to a sober living house in Fontana. He was given a job working for a solar panel installation company in Claremont. It so happened that his first job was installing solar panels at our Santa Angelina Senior Living Housing Project. (Or maybe it was a God thing). On Ash Wednesday while Charlie was working, he looked down from the roof and saw Fr. Barrett in the CLC yard playing with the children. He goes down and asks if Fr. Barrett remembers him. Fr. says of course, they embrace, and thus our Lenten Redemption Story. Below is the picture of Charlie at lunch after his inspiring testimonials.



OUTREACH

Laundry Love

On February 15, 2024, Blessed Sacrament Laundry Love served 59 people, doing 511 loads, spending \$795.75 (\$1.56/load, \$13.48/person, 8.66 loads/person) at Busy Bee Laundry. CLC contributed \$20 and J.R. Arnold contributed \$25. Busy Bee Laundry employee Beladaia led Blessed Sacrament volunteers J.R. Arnold, Marion Lee, and Doug Lee. 48 eight-ounce containers of hand sanitizer contributed by Sheila Jordan, assistant director of CLC, were given out. One coloring book and box of crayons were given to a child. Detergent provided free by Earthbreeze.com was used. Thanks very much to all supporters.

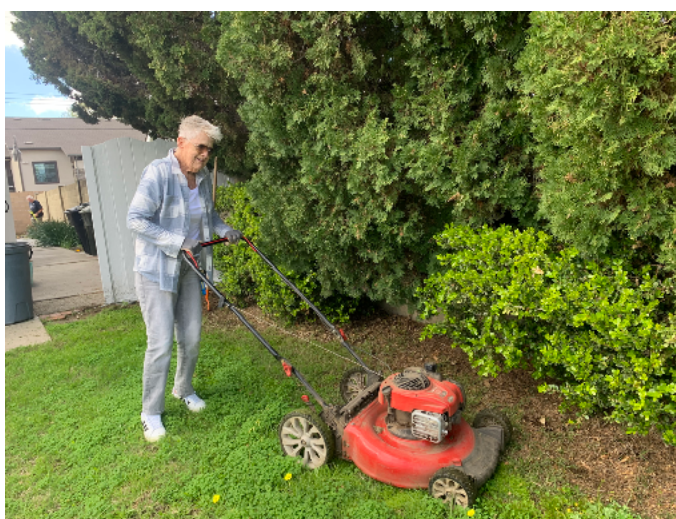
On March 21, 2024, Blessed Sacrament Laundry Love served 73 people, doing 662 loads of wash and dry, spending \$1,044.00 (\$1.58/load, \$14.30/person, 9.07 loads/person) at Busy Bee Laundry. Volunteers Mary Dalessi, Marion Lee, and Doug Lee assisted Busy Bee Laundry employees Amalia and Beatrix. CLC contributed \$20, and CLC assistant director

Sheila Jordan contributed 40 8-fluid ounce containers of hand sanitizer. One coloring book, one box of crayons, and about 20 face masks were given out. Thanks very much to all supporters.

As of February 20, 2024, the balance for Laundry Love is only \$384. Your generous contributions have always supported this ministry. Please continue to offer support by designating any specific contribution to Laundry Love in the memo portion of your check.

Tuesday Task Force (TTF) - A Decade of Gardening Experience

Tuesday Task Force members, Gary Niebuhr, Marilyn White and Dick Reimers share ten (10) years of gardening at Blessed Sacrament between them. Gary is 72, Marilyn is 82 and Dick is 92. Why do we know that? We celebrated birthdays together at Del Taco complete with cake, balloons and a card. Del Taco is where we meet for lunch, usually about 12:30 p.m. Marilyn, our newest member, heard that TTF does quite a bit of gardening, which she loves, and she has been a very active member ever since. We also do a lot of other tasks. The Rectory yards are our responsibility, and we usually tend to them at least twice per month. Our next project will be cementing the memorial rose garden tiles, all 65 of them, in the breezeway by the office. If you wish to help, please feel free to contact Dick Reimers or Teri Niebuhr for more information. We would love to have you!



Hard at work at the Parish House, Tuesday Task force members, from left: Dick Reimers, Marilyn White and Gary Niebuhr.

March Deacon's Corner

Lenten Greetings, my friends!! I hope you all have been having a blessed Lent and have been taking advantage of the Lenten offerings here at Blessed Sacrament. I thought I'd share some of my own happenings during Lent. As some of you know, not only am I Parish Deacon here at Blessed Sacrament, but I take part of many diocesan liturgies, including February 17th at Christ The Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Los Angeles, for the Lenten Service of Lament and Hope for Black Lives and the Celebration of the Life and Ministry of The Right Reverend Barbara Clementine Harris, who was the first woman ordained Bishop in the Anglican Communion, and of course whenever Bishop Taylor calls upon me, because all Deacons serve under the Bishop. If you are interested in rewatching these services, please go to our diocesan YouTube page. I am also an Alternate Deputy to General Convention this year which is taking place in Louisville, Kentucky. I have met with the Deputies of Color and also the Deputies under 40 to talk about issues that we believe are important for the church to consider for our future together as well as to fellowship and to get to know one another. My travel season is about to get underway after Easter. There will be much more to come on my adventures with the diocese and the national church, and I can't wait to share them all with you.

In His Service,
The Rev. Deacon Dominique Piper



At St. John's Cathedral, Los Angeles. From Left to Right: Rev. Margaret McCauley, Rev. Susan Anderson-Smith, Rev. Vanessa Mackenzie, Rev. Guy Leemhuis, Rev. Dominique Piper, Rev. Canon Jamesetta Hammons, and The Very Rev. Anne Sawyer.

Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday commemorates when our Lord rode into Jerusalem on a donkey right before his death, to fulfill prophecy in the Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus was greeted by cheering crowds with palm branches that symbolizes praise and victory for the Messiah that has come to save the people.

Palm Sunday marks the start of Holy Week--the most sacred week of the Christian calendar each year. On March 24, we relived the moment with the Liturgy of Palms; when Jesus rode through the town of Jerusalem with the procession of palms on His way to conquer death and bring us life through His sacrifice on the cross.

The service at Blessed Sacrament began outside as Fr. Barrett blessed the palms and the choir sang hymns acapella while hand-made palm crosses were also given out. We then processed into church for the liturgy which was sacred and beautiful. The Mass continued in our Sanctuary with a dramatic reading of the Passion of our Lord and Holy Eucharist. After the service, a reception was held in our Scully Parish Hall and additional blessed palms were given out to be taken home.





HOLY WEEK

Maundy Thursday

Triduum Fellowship Meal and Maundy Service at Blessed Sacrament. Supper at 6 PM, then Holy Communion in the Sanctuary, followed by the stripping of the Altar and pray at the Altar of Repose holding the reserved Sacrament for Good Friday



Also known as the Last Supper where Jesus give instruciones for The Communion presenting the Bread as His body, and the Wine as His blood both times commanding that this be done to remember Him.

Good Friday

He Died So That We Might Live

The Good Friday Service at noon was sacred. It included a reading of The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John. Fr. Barrett gave an inspirational sermon about how without Good Friday there would be no Easter Sunday. There was also individual veneration of the Cross by the congregation. The Reserve Sacrament was offered to those who wanted to receive communion. There was no dismissal or blessing, and the people departed in silence.



Fr. Barrett during the sermon and the side altar with the Reserve Communion



"It is finished..."

Great Vigil at Emmanuel, Fullerton

The Great Vigil was held at Emmanuel, Fullerton at 6:30 PM. Unfortunately no pictures are available.

Easter Sunday

The Lord has risen, He has risen indeed! Alleluia!!!

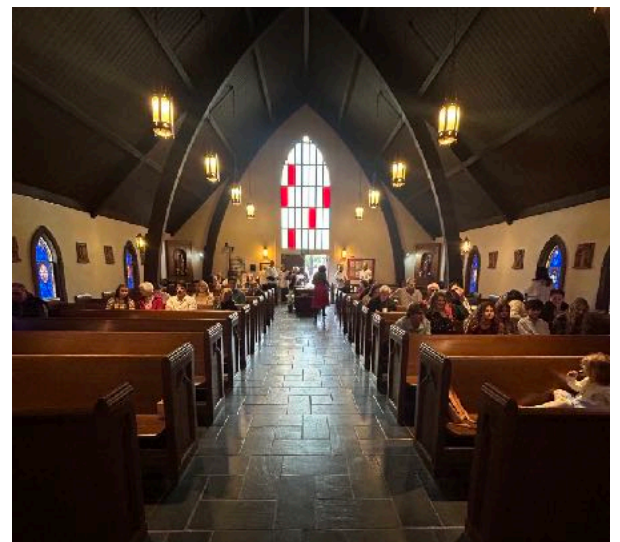
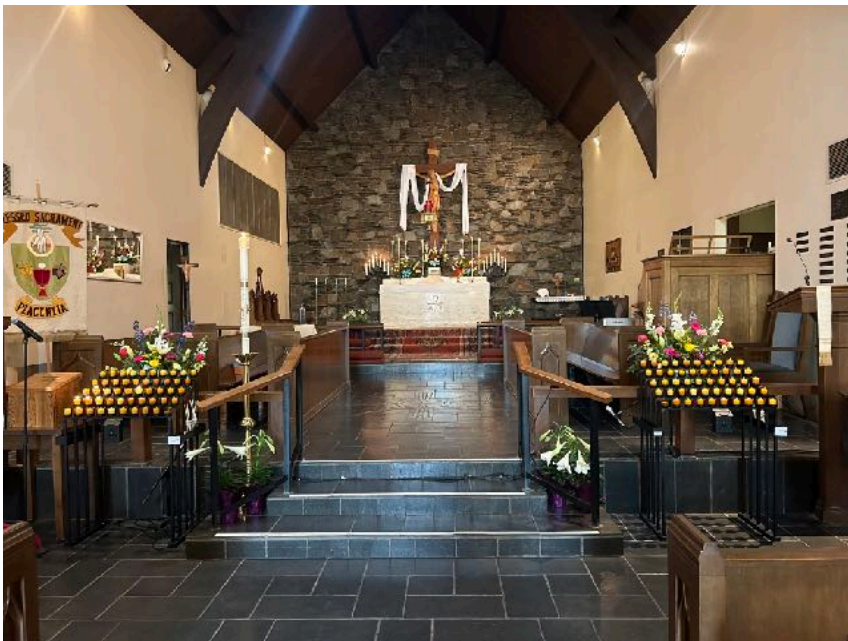
The Altar Guild did a beautiful job adorning our sanctuary for the Resurrection of our Lord.

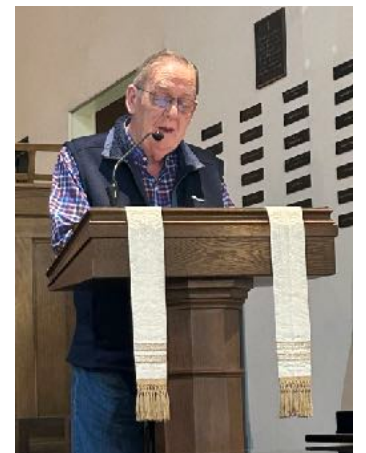
As we process down the nave, we witness the celebration of Easter with Incense and bells, including Fr. Barrett's ancient bells from Ethiopia. Our beautiful choir provided the joyful music for this holy day and we are so grateful for their God-given talents.

During the service, Joe Arnold read the holy scriptures, and Deacon Dominique carried and read the Gospel. The Peace was shared with over 100 adults and children from all of our platforms.

We even had a visit from the Easter Bunny to join the over 30 children to find over 300 decorated eggs. The easter hunt held inside the sanctuary due to the rainy weather. Both the children and the adults enjoyed the interaction.

A special thank you to our parish life coordinator, Beverly Cardwell, for her coordination of the Easter Reception I Scully Parish Hall.





We hope you all had a great and happy Easter Sunday.
The Bethlehem Staff

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