

Dear Friends,

We are mid-way through the Lenten season already. It is a spectacular Monday morning as I write this letter. Already the temperature is well into the sixties and tonight the sun will set after 7:00 p.m. Spring comes to us this week and life is good.

This week, and for the next two weeks, I will write about the Triduum, or the “Three Days”: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. These three days commemorate and celebrate the life of Jesus Christ from the Last Supper until the great night in which we see him rise again, as the Elect and the candidates for full communion in the Catholic Church receive the Sacraments of initiation.

Officially Lent ends on Holy Thursday. The season known as the Triduum begins with the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. This is the only Mass that will be celebrated in the parish, and every other parish on April 9. The only other Mass that will be celebrated in the Rockford Diocese, and many other dioceses throughout the world, is the Chrism Mass. During the Chrism Mass the holy oils used for the sacraments of Anointing the Sick, Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders will be consecrated.

By the time we celebrate the Mass of the Lord’s Supper at 7:00 p.m. this April 9, the tabernacles in the Church and the Daily Mass chapel will be empty because on this night, we commemorate the Last Supper. Enough hosts will be consecrated to provide for everyone who will receive Holy Communion on Good Friday.

Twelve people from the parish will, on this night, have their feet washed. After the homily, I will take off the white chasuble and stole. These vestments symbolize the ministry of the priesthood. By taking them off and washing the feet of the faithful, I am not divesting myself of the priesthood, but I am, in a real way putting on the role of a servant, as Jesus did when he washed the feet of his disciples.

After Holy Communion is over the tabernacle will remain open and the remaining consecrated hosts will be left on the altar. There will be the normal Prayer after Communion and then we will have a procession with the Body of Christ within the ciboria and the assembly from the sanctuary of the Church to a chapel that will be set up in the basement where we will have Eucharistic Adoration until 10:00 p.m.

The Mass of the Lord’s Supper is so beautiful because we commemorate the institution of the Eucharist, which is the source and summit of all Christian life. We also

commemorate the institution of the priesthood; specifically the ordained priesthood, but also, in a very real way, the priesthood of all believers, the priesthood of the baptized. Finally, we commemorate the commandment of Jesus Christ to, “Love one another as I have loved you.” We are all brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, called to take up our crosses each day and to die to ourselves for the good of others.

This Mass reminds us of how sacred the Sacrament of the Eucharist is and it beautifully reminds us of how we are called to serve one another with deep compassion and generosity. I look forward to celebrating the Mass of the Lord’s Supper with you.

In joyful hope,

Fr. Tim Seigel