

## A NOTE FROM FATHER EICKHOFF

Some early Protestants refused to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas saying that Christ's birth was of no great importance and its celebration overshadowed Easter. Instead, they put all their emphasis on the resurrection of Christ at Easter. Those early Protestants were not entirely incorrect. The celebration of Christmas both some four hundred years ago and today often seems to be celebrated with greater passion than Easter. Think of all the effort that goes into decorating homes, streets, and stores around Christmas time. Think of the great sums of money that goes into purchasing gifts at Christmas. Think of the abundance of songs, shows, and movies that center around Christmas. Now think of how many songs, shows, and movies in our society focus on Easter. Now think of the relative poverty of decorating that goes into our homes, streets, and stores at Easter. We do put more emphasis in secular society on Christmas than we do for Easter.

I don't want to sound as if I am seeking to cancel Christmas. By no means! Christmas is a wonderful day of celebration for all the right Christian reasons. It marks the beginning of the ministry of Jesus Christ and of our salvation. However, Easter is the payoff that makes the celebration of Christmas worthwhile. To skip Easter and only celebrate Christmas is to put everything about our Christian Faith in reverse. Or to use an old saying: "putting the cart before the horse."

The relative poverty of societal celebration of Easter makes it more important for us as Christians to celebrate the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ with great joy in our homes and in our parish. This is the week in which our Savior Jesus Christ took our sins upon Himself and wiped them away. This is the week in which our Lord gave to us the Holy Mass and the Holy Eucharist that we might be strengthened and enriched during our lives on Earth. This is the week in which we are reconciled to God and given the hope of everlasting life. This week we celebrate the great and amazing act of salvation which turns us human beings from lost and forlorn sinners who were separated from the Creator of the Universe to children - sons and daughters - of our heavenly Father who is now present not in some faraway place, but within our very hearts, minds, and souls.

So please come out and celebrate your salvation by coming to church to worship and praise God during this sacred time of Holy Week. Pray to God within your homes and give thanks to Jesus Christ for His sacrifice upon the cross for our salvation. Rejoice this week with uplifted heart and be of good cheer to everyone you meet in the street, in your workplace, in your school for this is the week in which we Christians must celebrate greater than any other.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Stephen Eickhoff  
Pastor