

**Companions on the Journey**

**March 27, 2022**

Dear Friends,

We find ourselves at the midpoint of the Lenten Season. Today is what is known as Laetare (Lay-Tar-Ayh) Sunday. The Lenten color of purple is softened and lightened into a rose because we are fast approaching the end of our Lenten penitential practices. The Church gives us a little breather. Laetare Sunday is about rejoicing. For what is coming. For what the Lord has already done, already accomplished but whose celebration fast approaches.

I want you to think three weeks out, to April 17<sup>th</sup> when we celebrate the great feast of Easter, I want specially to speak to those who have been away from the practice of the faith because of the pandemic. But for other reasons as well. This Easter is the time when I speak for Our Lord extending an invitation to all to return, to come home to the Eucharist for Easter. For whatever reason or reasons you have not felt comfortable in coming, participating, worshipping, receiving Holy Communion this year the Lord is extending a special invitation through me to you. Come to the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night at 8pm, or on Easter at 8:15 or at 10:30.

We have been gathering in Church now for over 20 months and there have been no known infections from these gatherings. If you feel more comfortable in wearing a mask by all means do so. If you have health reasons or someone at home does, wear a mask. If you have not received the Sacrament of Reconciliation in a while I will be hearing confessions Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week, afternoon and evening (4:00 to 5:00; 6:30 to 7:30, or until all the confessions have been heard.). In addition, I will be hearing confessions on Holy Saturday afternoon from 1:00 until 3:00 There will be plenty of opportunities to come and quietly confess and receive the absolution the Lord desires to give you and which your heart yearns to receive.

Encourage other family members to attend and participate with you. Even if there is a good number of worshippers present, let the Lord tend to you, “spiritually” wash your feet, heal any wounds that are the result of the pandemic or other afflictions that have taken place over the past years. “Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy burdened, and I will give you rest. Take up my yoke and learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart. And you will find rest for your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Have you been laboring under a burden or under several of them? Do you seek relief? Then come to receive absolution. Let the Lord restore the joy of your youth at Easter. Please think about it. Please come. And as Deacon Michael says: “Come again and bring a friend.” Yes. Do that.

Peace,

Msgr. McHenry