

## **Reflection for the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent**

Recently I was speaking with a member of our Parish who had just recently been able to get together with extended members of her family. Of course it was a small group, but she felt blessed to get together with family, for she had not seen them in over a year. This got me thinking of times my mother and her three brothers would get together, it did not happen very often due to distance and their work schedules. It was a blessing when they did get together, they would tell stories about their youth. I remember that most of the time their stories would include an event that had their Dad, my Grandfather appearing not too pleased with what was taking place.

Over the years they would relate a time in Lent when on a Saturday morning as they all helped clean the house they determined that in the spirit of Lent they should cover all the statues in the house. My Grandfather was a convert to the Catholic faith, and even though he attended Mass every Sunday he seemed to always struggle to understand the customs that can be a part of the Catholic faith. My uncles tell the story that once they covered every statue and picture in the house, their Father, my Grandfather came down stairs for breakfast and so the family gathered around the dining room table, grace was prayed and they ate their breakfast. It was not until the second cup of tea that my Grandfather noticed every statue and picture in the house was covered with a black cloth. After my Grandfather noticed there was not a picture or statue in the house that did not have a black cloth covering it, he turned to my Grandmother and in a whisper asked her, who had passed away? When she informed him that no one had passed away rather the pictures and statues were covered as part of their observance of the Season of Lent. At that point my Grandfather informed my Grandmother that even after 15 years as a Catholic he still did not understand the Catholic faith.

When my Uncles and my mom would share stories about their childhood it always seemed to end with the story about my Grandfather and a great deal of laughter would follow. Here in the United States the practice of covering crosses and images in the Church use to normally start on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent and the coverings would remain on until the Easter Vigil. Of course not all Catholic Parishes had the tradition of covering crosses in the Church as part of the Lenten observance in the Parish. The tradition of covering crosses in the Church dates back to before Vatican II and the reform of the Liturgical Calendar. Prior to Vatican II the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent was known as Passion Sunday and Palm Sunday followed. In closing on this 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent may we know that our Lenten journey is coming to a close for next week is the celebration of Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord, the beginning of Holy Week. In this final week before Palm Sunday, may we take the time to prepare ourselves for the most Holy and Sacred week of the year.

## **Prayer for the Virtual Fish Fry**

Dear Lord, we as a people have been on a Lenten journey, striving to overcome our shortcomings and to be renewed in spirit. This 40-day journey is coming to an end, Holy Week; the Paschal Triduum is upon us. In these final days, and hours of preparation before the most holy week of the year, we ask you Lord to cleanse our souls and open our hearts to your love and peace. May all our thoughts actions and deeds in these final days before Easter, proclaim what we believe and know to be true that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior. In closing dear Lord, we ask that you bless the food that we gather to eat as a family of believers. Amen.