

# BESIDES RESTFUL WATERS

Dear Parishioners,

During this time of pandemic illness and social distancing, the image of Christ the Good Shepherd in this week's Liturgy comes as a welcome relief and as a healing remedy for so many who are suffering and over worked.

In our busy world we do not often have a table set before us, or have our heads anointed with oil, or have our cups overflowing. The reality is that we struggle to find the green pastures and those restful waters where we can find repose and have our souls refreshed.

While we know and believe that Christ never leaves his flock untended, it is during this time of social distancing that we experience the need for his sacramental presence. We hunger for the Eucharist, and when we need it most, it is not available to us.

This time of social distancing can be a grace to help us appreciate what we take for granted or seem too busy at times to participate in on a regular basis. Does absence make the heart grow fonder, or does it make us forget.

Our present situation helps us to reflect on the meaning of the Eucharistic presence. While we are concerned about how we can receive the Eucharist, we do not always spend as much time and energy reflecting on the fact that we are a Eucharistic Community. Being a Eucharistic community means that we are the body of Christ and are called to be bread that is broken for the salvation of the world. Through lives of service and by being present to our sisters and brothers in need, we like Christ, are called to be good shepherds, for our time and place.

Simply receiving the host and not allowing ourselves to be transformed in Eucharist is to forget the words of Jesus who said, "do this in memory of me." The washing of the feet in John's gospel demonstrates what Jesus intends his church to be.

So, while the conversation remains incomplete in our weekly website Mass, it remains a reminder that the Eucharistic presence is very real in the lives of our parishioners and families who are suffering in so many ways to be present to each other.

One day we will again come together for the Eucharist. On that day we will bring our offerings to church, the offering of ourselves, our sorrows, our good works, our foot washings, our time, treasure and talents. We will

celebrate the reality that Jesus humbled himself to share in our humanity that we could share in his divinity.

In sharing in the breaking of the bread we will once again be complete as a community of faith. It is my hope that absence does make the heart grow fonder, and not forget. It is my hope that this time of pandemic and social distancing will find us all watchful in prayer, our hearts filled with wonder and praise, as we celebrate the dawn that is breaking upon us, as we emerge from darkness into light.

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, for he is worthy to receive blessing and honor and glory. This will be our Easter song, as we wait patiently for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

As we continue to adjust to the new normal of our lives now and in the days ahead, let us continue to remember the marks of the church that are mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles: “They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one’s needs. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes.”

**FATHER GAGNE**