

FROM THE PASTOR
MAY 8, 2022
THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

OPEN WIDE GATES OF MERCY

On this Mother's Day we cordially congratulate all our dear mothers. May God ever reward the goodness and sacrifices of our mothers.

We find ourselves at this Mothers Day in the midst of the Holy and Joyful Season of Easter. We have celebrated the wonder of the Redemption through the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The joyful alleluia will resound throughout our Church for many more weeks of the Easter Season, or Eastertide. Christ is Risen! He is Truly Risen!

Our Lord's Redemption through His sacrificial death on the Cross has thrown open the Gates of Mercy to us. No wonder that Our Lord referred to Himself as *the Gate*. Indeed, He is the Gate through which Mercy has entered our world. This wondrous mystery was made dramatically manifest in the ancient Church by the practice of the doors of the Church remaining open for all of Easter. It is figuratively displayed by the sanctuary doors being left open for all Easter in the Byzantine Church. And in the classic iconography of the Resurrection Our Lord is depicted as throwing open the gates of hell, so all may be free beginning with Adam and Eve.

One of the great principles of Christian architecture is the opening and closing of space. Some may recall that I wrote a great deal about this at the time of the planning for the renovation of the Church. It is the spatial expression of the opening of the Gates of Mercy.

This opening and closing of space is a physical reflection of the Redemption which has opened for us the gates of Heaven. And thus, in just one example of this classic Church architecture (St. Peter's Basilica) we see this beautifully portrayed.

The Basilica of St. Peter in Rome is first encountered after walking through a labyrinth of small, winding, dark cobble stone streets. Many are familiar with the great boulevard that runs from the Tiber to the square of the basilica. This is called the Via della Conciliazione (the Street of the Reconciliation). It was built after the Lateran Pact of 1929 to celebrate the peace between the Holy See and the Italian State. But before that time, it was a true neighborhood. As impressive as the wide boulevard is, it did depart from the idea of suddenly finding oneself in a great urban space. One would walk through it and then suddenly stumble into St. Peter's Square. Thus, the closed space suddenly opened. As one advanced through the square (or piazza) the open space suddenly closed, as one walked through the portico (or gates) of the Basilica. Then it opened again as one walked into the majestic basilica bathed in sunlight. Then the space closed again as one came to the Tomb of St. Peter, a small crypt where the bones of the Galilean fisherman are enshrined. Then

the space opens again as we humbly approach the Chair of St. Peter supported by the Four Doctors of the Church under the beautiful alabaster window of the Holy Spirit. It is a wondrous illustration of how the Gates of Heaven have been opened to us.

Our own Church strives to make known the same mystery of Mercy. From the large plaza in front of the Church we enter through the Gold Doors. We enter the Gates of Mercy. But then the space closes as we stand in the Narthex with its glass curtain wall which invites to come and see the Goodness of the Lord. We walk through yet more gates as we enter the House of God and the Gate of Heaven. The saints, our ancestors in the faith, stand with us in the nave as we all face the Glory of God manifested in the Beauty of Holiness. We face the East, the rising of the Golden Sun from the Rose-colored Dawn. Then finally we come to the gates of the sanctuary. There in humility, meekness, and littleness we kneel before the Lord of Heaven and Earth. Looking to the Crucifix we make within our soul that humble prayer, *Jesus I trust in You*. The expression on the face of our crucified Lord is one of peace, of acceptance, of surrender. No wonder the artist called this beautiful work of Art, *Mission Accomplished*.

In the nave of the Church are three chapels which help us to approach the Altar of Grace and Mercy. If our soul should become feint, we have the Virgin of Guadalupe and the Divine Mercy to encourage us right at the entrance to the Church. We may rest in the Rosary Chapel, and strengthened by that most powerful prayer, continue our journey to that Garden of our Sanctuary. The marble and porcelain almost blind our weak eyes as we behold the Light that no Darkness will extinguish. It is the garden where all love ends. And there we behold that Love which moves the Heavens and all the Stars.

COMMUNION BREAKFAST

Next Sunday, May 15th, will be our annual Communion Breakfast sponsored by the Marian Guild and the Knights of Columbus. Please make every effort to attend. The Dominican Sisters of Mary Mother of the Eucharist will be our honored guests and will speak to us about their mission of education of the young and the founding of their community which is only 25 years old.

AWARDS DINNER AND GOLF OUTING

Please see the bulletin for information about our Annual Awards Dinner and Golf Outing to be held on June 2nd. This is the major fundraiser for our parish and therefore I humbly ask your generous participation in this endeavor. Last year we broke all records in netting over \$101,000 for St. Paul's. This year our fervent and fond hope is to exceed this record. Because this is so important, I will be speaking at all the Masses on May 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th to explain our great need for your support.

THE BLESSED EUCHARIST

One area of great concern to me as your pastor is the sad discovery of the sacred hosts through the Body of the Church. May I remind everyone that the Eucharist is to be consumed immediately upon receiving it in the presence of the priest or deacon. It is not to be carried away with us nor consumed in the pew. It is not put into a pocket or a purse. The ushers stand near the priest and are instructed to remind people to put the host into their mouths. If wearing a mask, please be sure that the mask is completely down when you approach for Holy Communion. One should not be fussing with the mask while holding the sacred host which is the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

*In Jesus and Mary,
Monsignor Pereda*