

# From the Pastor

## Easter Sunday, April 21, 2019

In the Book of Exodus, chapter twelve, the first Passover Ritual is described as an annual celebration of the liberation of the Israelites after 430 years of slavery in Egypt.

The Hebrew word used in the text is *pesach*, meaning “to pass over”. The Greeks appropriated this word into their languages as *pascha*, which the Latins rendered as *paschalis*. All refer to the same miraculous saving intervention by God. Since the Last Supper of Jesus was a Passover meal, and He identified the bread and wine as His Body and Blood to be sacrificed, the saving act of the Old Covenant, was linked to the central event of the New Covenant. We celebrate this at every mass.

When the faith spread into northern Europe, where the differences between spring and winter are more pronounced than in the Holy Land, the Paschal Feast came to be associated with spring, as the dawn of a new year of life for the earth.

The Proto-German word for “dawn” was *austron*, from which the direction-word *aust*, now “East” is derived: i.e. the direction of dawn. When this crossed over into England, Christians in Northumbria began referring to the Paschal Feast as the “Dawn-Feast” of the liturgical year, with the word *Eostre*, from *austron* for dawn, which transitioned into Old English as *Eastre*, and then to modern English as *Easter*.

Pope Saint Leo the Great (r. 440->461), elaborated on this mystery in Sermon 71, as follows:

*“I think, we explained to you our participation in the cross of Christ, whereby the life of believers contains in itself the mystery of Easter, and thus what is honoured at the feast is celebrated by our practice. And how useful this is you yourselves have proved, and by your devotion have learned, how greatly benefited souls and bodies are by longer fasts, more frequent prayers, and more liberal alms. For there can be hardly any one who has not profited by this exercise, and who has not stored up in the recesses of his conscience something over which he may rightly rejoice. But these advantages must be retained with persistent care, lest our efforts fall away into idleness, and the devil's malice steal what God's grace gave. Since, therefore, by our forty days' observance we have wished to bring about this effect, that we should feel something of the Cross at the time of the Lord's Passion, we must strive to be found partakers also of Christ's Resurrection, and pass from death unto life 1 John 3:14, while we are in this body.”*

In our own parish, such spiritual practices have included: Distribution of Ashes (March 6<sup>th</sup>), Stations of the Cross every Friday, Tuesday Holy Hours, weekday and First Saturday Rosary, Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament on Tuesdays and First Fridays, opportunities for confession every single day before mass as well as the three special Wednesday evenings arranged by the Archbishop, and many others.

In terms of community building, we have had: a Knights of Columbus Breakfast (March 10<sup>th</sup>), three well-attended Fish Fry's (March 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>), a Spring Fling (April 6<sup>th</sup>), the Sacrament of Confirmation for nineteen of our young parishioners (March 21<sup>st</sup>), a special evening of Louisiana projects by our school (March 26<sup>th</sup>), and a Living Stations of the Cross acted out by our school children on Holy Thursday (April 18<sup>th</sup>).

These are only a few of the many examples of the life and faith that you all keep alive at our parish. And so, I take this opportunity to once more thank you.

May this Easter Season bring health and happiness to you all.

St. Louis King of France, pray for us.

Father Mark