

ST. GERTRUDE THE GREAT NEWSLETTER

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ST. GERTRUDE THE GREAT BISHOP'S APOSTOLATE • 4900 RIALTO ROAD • WEST CHESTER, OHIO 45069
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FROM BISHOP DOLAN

My dear Friends,

A late Easter has led us to Our Lady's month, doubling our paschal joys even as it calls us back, sweetly but insistently, to seemingly Lenten prayer. I say "Lenten" because living the liturgy these days and following our beloved devotions demands the sacrifice of time and energy just when the world has had enough, and has moved on to other things. More work remains, and fewer laborers to gather in the harvest.

Then there is the fatigue itself of keeping holy days and seasons. It's tiring! Nowhere is this more true than at Lent's culmination, Holy Week. The long hours of preparation, the behind-the-scenes practice sessions, lead into the even longer, more intense ceremonies, as well as quiet watching and prayer. By the end of it, by Easter when you're meant to feel exultant, you're actually exhausted. There is a reason for this.

Lent and Holy Week, with their penances and prayers, the fatigue of fasting and participation in the endless round of ceremonies, *are* meant to exhaust us, leaving us dead to self, without a seeming shred of energy left, "lest flesh should glory". Thus humbled and in the dirt, do we meet that Lord of ours whom we've been following all the while, "up to Jerusalem" and Calvary.

We meet Him on the ground where He lies, having fallen beneath the weight of His cross. Ground is "*humus*" in Latin, the root of *humility*. Only when there is none of us, of our natural strength left, will Christ take over, and be our all in all, and will Easter be victorious in us. "Christ humbled Himself," the Epistle sings on Palm Sunday, and we continue the hymn all three nights in the darkness of Tenebrae, "becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Only then may we triumphantly conclude at Easter, "For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names."

This story of self-draining, of death to self, man's weakness supported only by God's strength, is never composed only of a week, a season, or a year in the life of a Christian. It goes on, grinding *us* down, that Christ



The entire Sacred Triduum was observed with solemn pontifical ceremonies at St. Gertrude the Great Church. (Above) His Excellency, Bishop Dolan, unveils the crucifix during Good Friday ceremonies.

may be risen in us, all life long. How else would there be life?

Once we understand this Divine methodology, how easy it is to sustain the fatigue of waiting and watching year after year now, at Christ's tomb, where His Mystical Body, the Church, lies buried, quiet and still. Easter will come. Ours it is to conquer ourselves and persevere with Our Lady, the *Virgo Fidelis*, the Virgin Most Faithful. She will intercede for our perseverance, and supply us that supernatural strength when our own human forces have bit the dust again and again.

Blessed Easter! Blessed May! May these days of joy strengthen us even as they drain us of self, to prepare us for the place of joys unending.

Yours in the rejoicing Queen of Heaven,

– Most Rev. Daniel L. Dolan





(Above) For the past several years the donkey has had a place of prominence in our Palm Sunday Procession. Father McGuire, the celebrant of Palm Sunday's solemn high Mass, listens to the mournful tone of the day's Gospel sung by Father McKenna, who served as the deacon. (Below) Bishop Dolan, along with clergy and servers kneels, in prayer at the beautifully appointed Altar of Repose following the Mass and Procession on Maundy Thursday.



(Above) The pre-1955 Easter Vigil was observed with all its usual solemnity again this year at St. Gertrude the Great Church. The new fire was blessed, the five grains of incense were inserted into the paschal candle and it was lighted, the twelve Prophecies were read, and all the usual ceremonies at the baptismal font were observed and happily concluded with the baptism of three children. Then followed the Litany of the Saints, a pontifical Mass, and the blessing of Easter baskets. The day finally ended with a festive luncheon and an Easter egg hunt for the little ones that was held under sunny skies to the accompaniment of delightfully warm temperatures.

Remember your mother and our Blessed Mother in a special high Mass, Procession, and May Crowning at St. Gertrude the Great Church this coming May 11th.

Please complete the enclosed envelope and return it to us.