



# Alleluia

## **Sacred Heart Catholic Church**

168 E. Lincoln Street, Columbus, OH 43215  
614-294-5319 | [sacredheartchurchcolumbus.org](http://sacredheartchurchcolumbus.org)

*“The tomb of Christ, who is living, The glory of Jesus’ resurrection;  
bright angels attesting, The shroud and napkin resting.  
Yes, Christ my hope is arisen; to Galilee he goes before you.”*

*-Victimae paschali laudes*



## SACRED HEART

*Dear Friends in Christ,*

It was great to see so many people at **Sacred Heart** during **Holy Week** and on **Easter Sunday**. Let's hope many of them continue to attend and become permanent members of our community.

Just to keep you up to speed, we're looking at removing the famous green carpet, restoring some of the natural floor in the sanctuary and recarpeting the wooden additions to the sanctuary configuration. We have a donor for this, so it won't be coming out of what we do have in reserve. Some people asked if they could have a piece of the old carpet – yes – we'll keep a roll when it is removed and anyone who wants to cut off a piece, may. **The green carpet was laid in 1966!**

Also, we have replaced the cleaning company we have been sharing with **St. John's** with a part-time maintenance/cleaning man. His name is **Manuel Alvarado**. **Joe Clemens** from our parish will be helping him at **Sacred Heart**. If you see him around, make him feel welcome. **Sister Miriam Joseph** volunteered to help in the sacristy.

We have worked out a mutually beneficial deal with the **sisters**. Their **Order** has remodeled the upstairs of the rectory for the sister to live in. They have a new kitchen, a sitting room, a chapel, bathroom and three bedrooms. It's very nice. They have also painted the downstairs of the rectory for us and have had all the carpet cleaned. We're grateful for that. In a few weeks, downstairs will be a parish office and meeting space.

So, some things are happening at **Sacred Heart**. We're still in the planning stages of a major fund drive to do the deferred maintenance needed to keep going and stabilize the parish physically and financially. It's a big challenge, but I think we can do it. **Loyalty to Sacred Heart – present and future – will play a big part in our success.**

**Have a great week!**  
**Msgr. Lane**

**PLEASE SIGN UP FOR ADORATION:** In celebration of the **Jubilee 350th year of the apparition of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, Sacred Heart Church** will be open from **10:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.** every **Thursday** until the **Feast of the Sacred Heart on June 27, 2025**. During that time, the **Blessed Sacrament** will be exposed for **Adoration**, there will be **Mass at 6:30 p.m.**, followed by **Confessions and Benediction until 7:30 p.m.** There must be someone present throughout the entire day and help is needed! Please, sign up for an hour or half-hour of **Adoration on Thursday**. There are sign-up sheets at both church entrances. **Your help is needed for this especially important mission! In these troubled times in the country, the Church, and the world, this is a wonderful opportunity for us to seek our own personal freedom from all darkness and to help to heal all in our world that is so broken.**

Please contact Sacred Heart or St. John the Baptist Church if you are interested in becoming Catholic, receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation or Baptism, or for more information, contact the Parish Office at 614-294-5319.

For Weddings and Funerals, please contact Aggie Howard at ahoward@sjbitaliana.org or call the office at 614-294-5319.

## LECTORS

Saturday, April 13, 2024, 4:00 p.m.	Neil Sika
Sunday, April 14, 2024, 11:00 a.m.	Justin Pieper
Saturday, April 20, 2024, 4:00 p.m.	Joe Stefanov
Sunday, April 21, 2024, 11:00 a.m.	Bob Padberg
Saturday, April 27, 2024, 4:00 p.m.	Neil Sika
Sunday, April 28, 2024, 11:00 a.m.	Mary Rykowski

If you are unable to attend Mass, please contact Bob Longstreth. Thank you!

## MASSES FOR THE WEEK

<b>Sunday:</b> <b>April 14</b>	<b>St. John the Baptist – 9:30 a.m.</b> + <b>Anthony &amp; Carolyn Panico</b> <i>by the Panico Family</i> <b>Sacred Heart – 11:00 a.m.</b> + <b>Marie L.</b>
<b>Monday:</b> <b>April 15</b>	<b>St. John's – 9:00 a.m.</b> + <b>Karen Mikalonis</b> <i>by the Heinger Family</i>
<b>Tuesday:</b> <b>April 16</b>	<b>St. John's – 9:00 a.m.</b> + <b>Family of Mrs. Katie Lewis</b> <i>by the McCallum Family</i>
<b>Wednesday:</b> <b>April 17</b>	<b>St. John's – 6:00 p.m.</b> + <b>Antonio (Tony) Capoccia</b> <i>by Maria Capoccia</i>
<b>Thursday:</b> <b>April 18</b>	<b>Sacred Heart – 6:30 p.m.</b> + <b>Mark Hefner</b> <i>by the Thurn Family</i>
<b>Friday:</b> <b>April 19</b>	<b>No Mass</b>
<b>Saturday:</b> <b>April 20</b>	<b>Sacred Heart – 4:00 p.m.</b> + <b>Fr. Arthur McGovern, S.J.</b> <i>by John MacKinnon</i>
<b>Sunday:</b> <b>April 21</b>	<b>St. John's – 9:30 a.m.</b> + <b>Antonio (Tony) Caradonna</b> <i>by Damiano &amp; Gilda Pietropaolo</i> <b>Sacred Heart – 11:00 a.m.</b> + <b>Mildred Johnson</b> <i>by Margery Johnson</i>

### Confession and Adoration

<b>Confessions:</b>	<b>St. John's – Sunday – 8:30 a.m.</b> <b>Sacred Heart – Saturday – 3:00 p.m.</b> <b>Sacred Heart – Sunday – 10:30 a.m.</b> <b>Sacred Heart – Thursday – 7:00 p.m.</b>
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**Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:** Sacred Heart Thursdays, 10:00 a.m.-7:30 p.m.

**HELP KEEP THE DONUTS:** While we welcome everyone to enjoy coffee and donuts after **Sunday Mass**, the donations are no longer covering the costs. Please consider donating what you can, so we can continue this tradition.



**Congratulations to the family of Ryan and Natalie Barta whose son, Matteo James Barta was baptized on Sunday, April 14, 2024. May the Holy Spirit be with you all!**



**CONGRATULATIONS!**  
**To Chris Schultheis and Nina Duerk who entered in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony on April 13, 2024.**

**WEEKLY STEWARDSHIP AT SACRED HEART**

April 7, 2024

Number of Envelopes used Sunday – 18

In Env:	\$ 821.00
Loose:	\$ 1,074.00
Holy Day	\$ 60.00
March EFT:	\$ 2,830.00
Total	\$ 4,785.00
Less Diocesan 8% Assessment	\$ - (382.80)
	\$ 4,402.20

	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Difference (\$)</u>
This Week:	\$2,800.00	\$4,785.00	\$1,985.00

**DONATION QR CODE AND WEBSITE INFORMATION**



Please help Sacred Heart maintain this beautiful 100-year-old building with a donation by using the QR code. Thank you!



**SH Collection Counters – Monday, April 15, 2024**

Rita Ward and Donna Bowers

**SH Collection Counters - Monday, April 22, 2024**

David and Gilda Cottrill

**AROUND US**

**LITURGICAL CALENDAR:** The entire month falls during the **Easter** season. The liturgical color is white – the color of light, a symbol of joy, purity, and innocence. The month of **April** is dedicated to **The Holy Spirit**.

**The Holy Father’s Intentions for the Month of April 2024:**  
*We pray that the dignity and immense value of women be recognized in every culture, and for the end of discrimination that they experience in different parts of the world.*

**DID YOU KNOW? – WORLD’S LARGEST DIAPER DRIVE**

**2024:** The diaper need in our community continues to grow. The **World’s Largest Diaper Drive 2024 (WLDD 2024)** is just around the corner, and we need your help. The goal for **WLDD 2024** is to collect **one million** diapers through Diaper Drives and monetary donations during the month of **May**. To host a Diaper Drive, please call **Beth Snoke at 614-554-5664** or sign up at [www.registermydiaperdrive.com](http://www.registermydiaperdrive.com).

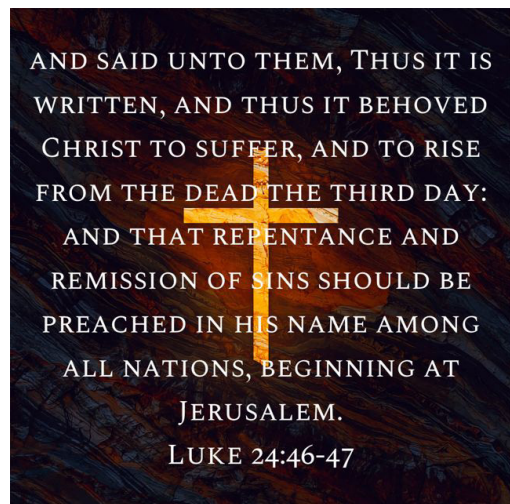
**CATHOLIC MEN’S LUNCHEON – FRIDAY, MAY 3, 2024**

– **SPEAKER FATHER STEVEN BESEAU.** Join us **Friday, May 3** at **St. Patrick Church** in downtown **Columbus** for a luncheon featuring a talk by **Fr. Steven Beseau, President / Rector of the Josephinum** on the **Status of the Josephinum.** **Jim Flaherty** sponsors the **May** luncheon. If you are interested in sponsoring a luncheon, contact **Pat Foley at [foleyp513@gmail.com](mailto:foleyp513@gmail.com)**. **Holy Mass** (optional) begins at **11:45 a.m.** followed by lunch at **12:10 p.m** and **Fr. Beseau’s** presentation. No reservations are necessary. **\$12.00** covers the lunch and meeting. Bring a friend! **Our final luncheon before the summer break is Friday, June 7, 2024,** and will feature **Patrick Madrid** who will give a talk entitled **“Ten Recent Discoveries That Point to The Existence of God.”** Mark your calendar now so you don’t miss it!

**MEN’S DAY OF REFLECTION AT THE JOSEPHINUM:**

**Columbus Catholic Men’s Ministry** and the **Pontifical College Josephinum** will host **“The Eucharist: Sacrament of Truth and Love,”** a day of reflection for men, at the **Josephinum.** Facilitated by **Father 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 1, 2024.** **Peter Fegan, OP,** Josephinum assistant professor and spiritual director, the event will include two conferences, the **Rosary,** outdoor **Stations of the Cross,** the **Sacrament of Reconciliation and Mass,** as well as breakfast, lunch, and a tour of the seminary. For more information and online registration, please visit: [pcj.edu/mensdayofreflection](http://pcj.edu/mensdayofreflection).

“The joy of the Gospel consists in this: that God loves us with tenderness and mercy. We are called to make this joyful message resound throughout the world, testifying to it with our love. May everyone discover the beauty of the love of God manifested in Jesus.” @Pontifex



**PRAYER: THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER:** *May Your people exult for ever, O God, in renewed youthfulness of spirit, so that, rejoicing now in the restored glory of our adoption, we may look forward in confident hope to the rejoicing of the day of Resurrection. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen*

# Lectio Divina

## SCRIPTURE READING + MEDITATION + PRAYER + CONTEMPLATION

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“What page, what passage of the inspired books of the Old and New Testaments is not the truest of guides for human life?” ~Saint Benedict, from the *Rule of Saint Benedict* (73:3)

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*The month of April is dedicated to the Holy Spirit.*

***“Christians must lean on the Cross of Christ just as travelers lean on a staff when they begin a long journey. They must have the Passion of Christ deeply embedded in their minds and hearts, because only from it can they derive peace, grace, and truth.”***

**+SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA**

### **Monday, April 15 ~ Third Week in the Season of Easter**

**Holy Gospel: John 6:22-29** After Jesus had fed the five thousand men, his disciples saw him walking on the sea.] The next day, the crowd that remained across the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not gone along with his disciples in the boat, but only his disciples had left. Other boats came from Tiberias near the place where they had eaten the bread when the Lord gave thanks. When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into boats and came to Capernaum looking for Jesus. And when they found him across the sea they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” Jesus answered them and said, “Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him the Father, God, has set his seal.” So they said to him, “What can we do to accomplish the works of God?” Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent.”

**Meditation:** What do you hunger most for in life? Is it health, wealth, power, titles, fame, love, truth, life? Jesus addressed this issue with those who sought him after the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves. Were they simply hungry for things which satisfy the body or for that which satisfies the heart and soul? Jesus echoes the question posed in the Old Testament by the prophet Isaiah: “Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy” (Isaiah 55:2)? There are two kinds of hunger -- physical and spiritual. Only God can satisfy the spiritual hunger in our heart and soul -- the hunger for truth, for life, and for love. Jesus also spoke about the works of God and what we must do to be doing the works of God, namely to believe in God's Son whom he has sent into the world.

**Prayer:** Grant, we pray, almighty God, that, putting off our old self with all its ways, we may live as Christ did, for through the healing paschal remedies you have conformed us to his nature. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** Jesus offers a new relationship with God which issues in a new kind of life – in fact the only *real* life. It is a life of love and service, and the forgiveness of others which corresponds to God's mercy and kindness; a life of holiness and purity which corresponds to God's holiness; and a life of submission and trust which corresponds to the wisdom of God. This is the work which Jesus directs us to and enables us to perform in the power of the Holy Spirit. Do you hunger for the bread which comes down from heaven and thirst for the words of everlasting life? Find this hunger, and fulfill it with Christ!

### **Tuesday, April 16 ~ Third Week in the Season of Easter**

**Holy Gospel: John 6:30-35** The crowd said to Jesus: “What sign can you do, that we may see and believe in you? What can you do? Our ancestors ate manna in the desert, as it is written: *He gave them bread from heaven to eat.*” So Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” So they said to Jesus, “Sir, give us this bread always.” Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.”



**Meditation:** Do you have a true and genuine hunger for the bread of life? The Jewish people had always regarded the manna in the wilderness as the bread of God (Psalm 78:24, Exodus 16:15). There was a strong Rabbinic belief that when the Messiah came he would give manna from heaven. This was the supreme work of Moses. Now the Jewish leaders were demanding that Jesus produce manna from heaven as proof to his claim to be the Messiah. Jesus responds by telling them that it was not Moses who gave the manna, but God. And the manna given to Moses and the people was not the real bread from heaven, but only a symbol of the bread to come. Jesus then makes the claim which only God can make: I am the bread of life. The bread which Jesus offers is none else than the very life of God. This is the one true bread which can truly satisfy the hunger in our hearts. So the question becomes for each of us: Do you hunger for God and for the food which produces everlasting life?

**Prayer:** O God, who open wide the gates of the heavenly Kingdom to those reborn of water and the Holy Spirit, pour out on your servants an increase of the grace you have bestowed, that, having been purged of all sins, they may lack nothing that in your kindness you have promised. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** Have you tasted the bread of life? Have you come to Jesus? Or are you trying to cram other things in your life, instead of the only thing that will give you meaning, direction – life itself?! So what do you have to do to receive this great treasure - this “pearl of great price” we hear in scripture - this living bread? You have to sell all you have; your desires to go your own way instead of God’s way; your desire to have power or fame. You have to put everything else behind God and seek Him and his righteousness first and all else will be given to you. This is never easy, and it will cost you a great deal. But what you get in return will be worth the price. So, seize this opportunity. Taste the bread that Jesus offers. Saint Augustine wrote a prayer to express his gratitude to God for giving us the bread of life: *You are great, Lord, and highly to be praised; great is your power and your wisdom is immeasurable. Man, a little piece of your creation, desires to praise you, a human being bearing mortality with him, carrying with him the witness of his sin and the witness that you resist the proud. Nevertheless, to praise you is the desire of man, a little piece of your creation. You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you. Amen.*

### **Wednesday, April 17 ~ Third Week in the Season of Easter**

**Holy Gospel: John 6:35-40** Jesus said to the crowds, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst. But I told you that although you have seen me, you do not believe. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him on the last day.”

**Meditation:** For us to understand who Jesus is, we need to understand why he called himself the “bread of life.” The Jews understood that God promised them manna from heaven to sustain them on their journey to the promised land. Bread is the very staple of life. We could not live without food for very long. Bread sustains us. But what, then, is life? Jesus clearly meant something more than mere physical existence. The life Jesus refers to is connected with God, the author of life. Real life is a relationship with the living God – a relationship based on trust, love and obedience. This is what Jesus makes possible for us -- a loving relationship with the God who created us for love with Him. Apart from Jesus no one can enter that kind of life and relationship.

**Prayer:** Be present to your family, O Lord, we pray, and graciously ensure those you have endowed with the grace of faith an eternal share in the Resurrection of your Only Begotten Son. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** Ask yourself: are you satisfied with mere physical existence, or do you hunger for real life? Jesus makes three claims here. First he offers himself as spiritual food which produces the very life of God within us. Second, he promises unbroken friendship and freedom from the fear of being forsaken or cut off from God. Third, he offers us the hope of sharing in his resurrection. Those who accept Jesus as Lord and Savior will be raised up to immortal life with Jesus when he comes again on the last day. Remember, our earthly journey is just that – a journey. And where our journey leads us is up to us as to whom we follow – is it Christ our shepherd and guide? Or is it someone or something else? Jesus leads us to eternal life, everything else leads to a dead end – literally! Knowing this, why would anyone choose to follow anyone or anything but Christ on our earthly journey?

## Thursday, April 18 ~ Third Week in the Season of Easter

**Holy Gospel: John 6:44-51** Jesus said to the crowds: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him, and I will raise him on the last day. It is written in the prophets: *They shall all be taught by God.* Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from him comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my Flesh for the life of the world."

**Meditation:** God offers us, his people, abundant life. But we can miss it. What is the bread of life which Jesus offers? It is first of all the life of God himself -- life which sustains us not only now in this age but also in the age to come. The Rabbis said that the generation in the wilderness have no part in the life to come. In the Book of Numbers it is recorded that the people who refused to brave the dangers of the Promised Land were condemned to wander in the wilderness until they died. The Rabbis believed that the father who missed the promised land also missed the life to come. When Jesus offers us real life he brings us into a new relationship with God, a relationship of trust, love, and obedience. And he offers us real life which last forever, a life of love, fellowship, communion, and union with the One who made us in love to be with him forever. To refuse Jesus is to refuse eternal life, unending life with the Heavenly Father. To accept Jesus as the bread of heaven is not only life and spiritual nourishment for this world but glory in the world to come. Do you truly accept Jesus as the bread of life?

**Prayer:** Almighty ever-living God, let us feel your compassion more readily during these days when, by your gift, we have known it more fully, so that those you have freed from the darkness of error may cling more firmly to the teachings of your truth. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** Saint Bonaventure wrote this prayer to Jesus, the bread of life: "Grant that my soul may hunger after Thee, the bread of angels, the refreshment of holy souls, our daily and super substantial bread, having all sweetness and savor and every delight of taste; let my heart ever hunger after and feed upon Thee, upon whom the angels desire to look, and may my inmost soul be filled with the sweetness of Thy savor; may it ever thirst after Thee, the fountain of life, the fountain of wisdom and knowledge, the fountain of eternal light, the torrent of pleasure, the richness of the house of God. May it ever compass Thee, seek Thee, find Thee, run to Thee, attain Thee, meditate upon Thee, speak of Thee, and do all things to the praise and glory of Thy name, with humility and discretion, with love and delight, with ease and affection, and with perseverance unto the end."

## Friday, April 19 ~ Third Week in the Season of Easter

**Holy Gospel: John 6:52-59** The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his Flesh to eat?" Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink his Blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my Flesh is true food, and my Blood is true drink. Whoever eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever." These things he said while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

**Meditation:** Why did Jesus offer himself as "food and drink"? The Jews were scandalized and the disciples were divided when Jesus said "unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no life in you." What a hard saying, unless you understand who Jesus is and why he calls himself the bread of life. The miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, when Jesus said the blessing, broke and distributed the loaves through his disciples to feed the multitude, prefigured the superabundance of the unique bread of the Eucharist, or Lord's Supper. The Gospel of John has no account of the Last Supper meal (just the foot washing ceremony and Jesus' farewell discourse). Instead, John quotes extensively from Jesus' teaching on the bread of life. In the Old Covenant bread and wine were offered in sacrifice as a sign of grateful acknowledgment to their Creator. Melchizedek's offering of bread and wine, who was both priest and king (Genesis 14:18), prefigured the offering made by Jesus, our high priest and king. The remembrance of the manna in the wilderness recalled to Israel that it lives by the bread of the Word of God (Deuteronomy 8:3). When at the Last Supper Jesus described his blood "poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28), he was explaining his coming crucifixion as a sacrifice for sins. His death on the cross



fulfilled the sacrifice of the paschal lamb. That is why John the Baptist called him the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." Jesus made himself an offering and sacrifice, a gift that was truly pleasing to the Father. He "offered himself without blemish to God" (Hebrews 9:14) and "gave himself as a sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:2).

**Prayer:** Grant, we pray, almighty God, that we, who have come to know the grace of the Lord's Resurrection, may, through the love of the Spirit, ourselves rise to newness of life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** Jesus chose the time of Passover to fulfill what he had announced at Capernaum – giving his disciples his body and his blood. Jesus' passing over to his Father by his death and resurrection, the new Passover, is anticipated in the Last Supper and celebrated in the Eucharist, which fulfills the Jewish Passover and anticipates the final Passover of the church in the glory of God's kingdom. When the Lord Jesus commands his disciples to eat his flesh and drink his blood, he invites us to take his life into the very center of our being. That life which he offers is the very life of God himself. Do you hunger for the bread of life?

### **Saturday, April 20 ~ Third Week in the Season of Easter**

**Holy Gospel: John 6:60-69** Many of the disciples of Jesus who were listening said, "This saying is hard; who can accept it?" Since Jesus knew that his disciples were murmuring about this, he said to them, "Does this shock you? What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the Spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe." Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who would not believe and the one who would betray him. And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father." As a result of this, many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer walked with him. Jesus then said to the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave?" Simon Peter answered him, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God."

**Meditation:** Jesus stated that he is the bread of heaven, the very life of God given to us as spiritual food to sustain us on our journey to the promised land of heaven. Jesus did not leave any middle ground for his hearers. They must either accept his word as divine or reject it as the claim of an imposter. Even the apostles admitted that this was a "hard saying." This expression meant that it was not just hard to understand, but hard to accept. Jesus pressed the issue with his beloved disciples because he wanted to test their faith and loyalty. Jesus promised his disciples nothing less than the full blessing of eternal life and union with God. Jesus assures his disciples that it is his heavenly Father who invites and who gives the grace to follow even in the "hard sayings." Jesus knew that some would not only reject him and his word, but would do so with hatred and violence, even betraying him to his enemies.

**Prayer:** O God, who in the font of Baptism have made new those who believe in you, keep safe those reborn in Christ, that, defeating every onslaught of error, they may faithfully preserve the grace of your blessing. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** It was through the gift of faith that Peter came to understand that Jesus was the true Messiah, the Holy One of God. He believed in the words which Jesus spoke, because he accepted Jesus as the Son of God and savior of the world. Faith is a personal response to God's revelation of himself to us. Faith is the key to understanding and experiencing God's action and work in our personal lives. Do you believe, as Peter did, that Jesus can change your life because he has the words of everlasting life? Ask the Lord to increase your faith that you may grow in your relationship with him and in the knowledge of his love for you.

Scripture passages (NAB translation) courtesy of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops;  
prayers are from *The Roman Missal*, Catholic Book Publishing, 2011;  
information about saints, solemnities, feasts and memorials courtesy of the Catholic Culture web site.

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