

FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**



Brothers and Sisters in Christ; Grace and peace!

On this Third Sunday of Easter, we continue our jubilant celebration of The Risen Christ, and truly rejoice with our 16 First Holy Communion candidates this year, who reflect an ancient tradition! These candidates join the five new Catholics who professed their Faith in the One and True Catholic Church during the Easter Vigil and the other nine members who were Confirmed and received their First Holy Communion bring the total number to **30**. We are grateful to God. Through these, Holy Mother Church provides our new and longer-standing Catholic Christians with renewed eagerness for our risen Lord.

The First Reading from the *Acts of the Apostles* describes Saint Peter's second sermon with the Jewish assembly at the Portico of Solomon in Jerusalem. With justifiable reprimand, Peter declares how the messianic prophecies have been fulfilled in the crucified and Risen Jesus; he challenges the people to turn back to God so that their sins may be wiped away. St. John instructs us, in the second reading, that to be perfected in God's love, we must keep His commandments.

Our Gospel continues to recount another appearance of Our Lord to his unbelieving Apostles hiding in the Upper Room. What I find interesting is that Jesus did not recount their acts of denial and cowardice as I referenced during my homily on Divine Mercy Sunday, but removed their doubts with his consoling greeting, "**Peace be with you.**" Additionally, He invites their touch and demonstrates his tangible presence by physically consuming the cooked fish. Initially afraid to allow themselves to believe following our Lord's agonizing suffering and death, peace begins to take root in the disciples' hearts. Jesus goes ahead to share the apostles' "Upper Room experience" like our Eucharistic celebrations; in the "Liturgy of the Word of God" Jesus speaks to us. In the "**Liturgy of Bread and Wine,**" Jesus becomes our genuine food and drink.

Every Sunday on our parish altars, like the early disciples, we come together to repent of our sins since we are always in need of God's forgiveness. We express our gratitude for the blessings we have received that week: we listen to God's Words and offer our lives to God along with our intentions. We wondrously partake of the supernatural food Jesus furnishes, His body and His blood, that miraculously provide for renewal of our souls. Just like the early apostles, Jesus needs *us* as witnesses to continue his mission as spirit-filled followers chosen to be His eyes, ears, and hands. Like last week's Divine Mercy observance, we pray to provide witness to His love, mercy, and forgiveness. May our daily lives be a true reflection and the means of experiencing and sharing the Risen Lord with our faith community and those in our ongoing circle of interactions. Amen.

Joyous Sunday!