

Easter C 5 May 18, 2025 5:15 Saturday only

In the first reading, Paul and Barnabas “called the church together and reported what God had done with them and how God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.”  
(Acts 14:27)

In that spirit, I offer a brief report on what God has done in our midst recently and the doors God has opened for us.

Since Easter, more than 40 children plus five teens and an adult received Eucharist for the first time, twenty this weekend. A youngster and an adult were admitted to the Catechumenate. Bishop Caggiano confirmed 37 young people two weeks ago, and on Pentecost I will confirm five more. We baptized four infants, and will three more in June. Two couples were married here, and three more will be by the end of next month.

And through all these sacramental celebrations, God opens doors to plunge each of us deeper into what God has done in our own lives.

God is making our parish family vibrant and alive!

Each week, ministers and staff prepare the readings, practice music, wash linens and compose the bulletin and e-blast, all to help us celebrate our liturgies.

And afterwards, others count the collection, replace spent candles, clean up and get this space ready for the next time.

But we aren't church just on weekends or only in this sanctuary; and God doesn't rest six days of the week!

Let me remind you of some of the ways we ARE church even when we aren't IN church.

Led by Mary Rolla, six generous women from the flower committee worked over four hours to prepare the roses given to the more than two hundred moms we celebrated on Mother's Day.

Scores of children scoured the grounds for the chocolate Easter eggs, generously donated by Vivica and Walter Woods.

The heads of all the parish organizations, United in Ministry group, led by Sue Stone, spent an evening coordinating the ministries for the coming year.

Gil Kleemann and the Parish Pastoral Council are soliciting nominations for its June elections. Frank Gilbride, a trustee, is helping them revise their by-laws. Paul Huston and the Finance Committee are finalizing the 2025-26 budget and the 2024-25 financial report.

Diane Pignataro, Eileen Rooney and the Women's Association have joined forces with Marigle Barrigan and the Welcome Committee to host a social on June 11<sup>th</sup>, with a special welcome for the thirty-seven newly registered families.

Mike Nedder and his team are organizing the golf tournament on June 16<sup>th</sup>, including lunch, prizes and after-tourney cocktails.

Though I'll offer an opening blessing for it, I personally don't play golf. I don't have the language for the game!

Marianne Gattinella and Joe Barragan are leading the Bishop's Appeal to another successful conclusion.

Susan Carroll and Debra McLaughlin have already begun planning our November 1<sup>st</sup> Jubilee Celebration dinner, while another Greenwich parish, Greenwich Catholic School and St. Michael's are planning the September 21<sup>st</sup> parish picnic.

Under the inspirational leadership of Angie Contadino, knitters each week lend their skills and compassion to craft shawls, signs of the Lord's embrace enfolding the sick, and the baptismal bibs, symbols that God clothes those children in the robes of God's family.

For Mother's Day, Isabel Zumelzu and Alicia Medina and the F.I.A.T. ministry hosted a social at Nathaniel Witherell, including cards handmade by members of the parish.

The Jubilee Year banners and posters, set up by Jill Gussis, Anne Marie Reilly, Ann Robertson and Sue Stone, remind us that we are Pilgrims of Hope. Watch for concrete ways to embrace that Hope through acts of compassion and reconciliation.

Genieve De Bono each week helps Fr. Richard and the scripture study group delve deeper into the Word of God.

At the risk of unintentionally omitting someone, I point to those who bring communion to the sick, especially at Nathaniel Witherell: David Santor, Susana Correa, Leslie Lopez, Ray Runn, Francisca Burros, Maria Henao, Laura Esposito, Alex Russo and Alex Ventosa. They carry with them not just the Eucharist, but our prayers and love.

What ways are you church between Sundays?

How did you meet the Risen Lord this past week?

Did you meet him, and love one another, on Monday in the breaking of the bread and the prayer of thanksgiving grace at your family dining table?

Or was it Tuesday in the embrace of conjugal love?

Or Wednesday when you shed tears for someone who is suffering?

Or Thursday when you exchanged forgiveness and reconciliation with a child or a parent, a spouse or a neighbor?

Or was it Friday, when you thrilled at the sunset or shooting stars?

Or Saturday, when a piece of music or art or poetry lured you out of yourself into Transcendence?

The Risen Lord Jesus has poured out his Spirit on us, so that we can meet him, and so love one another, in all the moments of human living.

The whole purpose of coming to church on Sunday is to BE church, in our families and our jobs and our schools, Monday through Saturday.

The whole purpose of celebrating here, in sacrament and scripture and song, is to enable us to recognize Christ in our sisters and brothers and in ourselves when we are not here.

The whole purpose of church is to fall in love with the God who has fallen in love with us, and to fall in love with God's people and God's creation.

The Finance Committee might frown on me for saying this, but, despite our pleas for financial stewardship, our families and our friendships don't exist in order to support the church; the church exists to support our families and our friendships and our vocations to love and serve one another and thus to evangelize our world.

If we miss Christ throughout the week, in our homes and offices and classrooms and streets, we won't meet him here at liturgy.

Equally, if we aren't here in church each Sunday to deepen our friendship with the Lord and with our fellow disciples, we won't recognize him, we won't BE church the other days.

There is little point in having our eyes opened to glimpse him at the altar at the Eucharistic breaking of the bread, if we don't look for Christ and encounter him when we break bread at the family dinner table.

There is little point in meeting Christ in the sign of peace, if you don't then encounter him in your spouse's

embrace of married love, or in the hand offered in forgiveness and reconciliation.

Why listen to Christ speak in scripture and sacred song, if we don't listen to his voice in the joy of conversation with friends, or are heedless of his shout in the cry of the poor, or are tone deaf to his singing to us in the roar of the ocean or the caws of the raven?

Easter declares that Jesus is alive and present in all the places where we ourselves are most alive:

in our hopes and dreams;  
at the bedside vigil for the sick,  
in the soup kitchen and on the protest march,  
in the solitude of prayer and  
amidst the toil of hard honest work.

Jesus Christ is alive wherever we come to life, in forgiveness, in humble service, in laughter and love, in tears and silent support and solidarity with those who suffer.

Jesus Christ is alive.

But don't take my word for it. Go and meet him for yourselves.

Be alive in all those places of home and hurt.

Open your eyes and your ears, your hearts and your hands.

Whisper a prayer of thanksgiving.

Shout a cry of joy.

Laugh, weep, be utterly still,

And Jesus Christ will reveal himself to you, as close as your own breath and heartbeat.

And he'll speak to you and embrace you and enflame you with a love beyond all telling.

And you will know gratitude and wonder, awe and joy and delight.

His Spirit will bring you to life; for you too will know, Jesus Christ is alive!

What was the most important event of this church since last week's Eucharist?

It's whatever way you became Eucharist, and Reconciliation, and Diakonia/Service, and Witness and Love, for in Eucharist we become what we receive---the very Body of Christ, given for the world.

Come back next week with the story of your own encounter with Jesus. And as the church has done for 2000 years, we will gather the folks and tell the story, all those stories of being Eucharist throughout the week; and we will break the bread.

And in the mercy of God, we will recognize Christ alive with us, and we will give thanks.

And for this great gift, the people of God say, Amen.