



Bishop Hogan blesses palms last Sunday at Sacred Heart Cathedral rectory.



A young parishioner at Sacred Heart pauses before the Palm Sunday procession enters the Cathedral.

Courier-Journal Photos by Laurence Keefe

The Christian: A Sacrament Of Easter

My Dear People:

Easter is the feast of hope because it assures us of victory over every dark hour of life and a triumph over the seeming finality of death itself. It means that despair has become alien to the vocabulary of the followers of Christ. No one of us who by faith live in Christ can ever say 'I cannot'. The only tomb that can contain us in perpetual darkness is the one we securely seal with the finality of our selfish alienation from God expressed by 'I will not'. This self-condemnation alone has the power to consign us to the living death of hopelessness.

The one vocation of the Christian is to be a sacrament of Easter—a living witness of the joyous news of Christ's Resurrection—a luminous sign to dispell the darkness of this world and to give direction to the aimless wanderer. This vocation to be Alleluia people is symbolized in the Easter vigil when the total darkness of the Church is first illuminated by the light of the paschal candle representing the Risen Christ. From this one candle, another is lighted, and then the candles of the whole assembled community until the darkness is totally dispelled. So will it be in this world of ours if our lives reflect the dawn of Easter.

All lives are filled with many nights—the nights of our limitations and failures and sufferings. The non-sense of our daily deaths can be erased only by the paschal sense of life.

Easter is sacramental every time one of us makes his life a source of light for his fellow man—when our words heal, when our hearts understand and when lesser values die in us for the sake of greater realities—when men are consoled and redeemed by our life and find hope when our presence persuades their dead spirits into life.

Easter is a sacrament when we promise fidelity anew to the life of Christ and to his commandment that we love one another with freedom, that we forgive one another with mercy and that we offer peace to one another with our lives.

This day is as demanding upon us in its challenge as is Calvary and its message cannot be adequately proclaimed until death to ourselves has fashioned us into an Alleluia people.

My Easter prayer for you and your families is this: May the message of the empty tomb bring all of us a deepening sense of our vocation as Easter people.

With a blessing, I am

Devotedly yours in Christ,

Joseph L. Hogan

Bishop Stresses Easter Vigil Importance

To stress the importance of the Easter Vigil liturgy this weekend, Bishop Hogan has directed all parishes to cancel the early Saturday evening Masses which usually anticipate the obligation of Sunday Mass.

The Easter Vigil ceremonies on Holy Saturday night may not begin before 7 p.m., the Bishop ordered, and no Mass may precede this liturgy.

If an additional Mass to fulfill the Sunday obligation is believed necessary to accommodate the parish, it must be celebrated after the Vigil and would probably not begin until around 8:30 p.m.

On Holy Thursday, although the Mass of the Lord's Supper is generally celebrated in the evening with full participation of the community expected, another parish Mass may be scheduled in the evening or in the morning for those who are unable to take part in the parish evening liturgy.

Another variation of liturgy this weekend will be the renewal of baptismal promises at the beginning of the Easter Sunday Masses in place of the customary penitential rite asking for forgiveness of sins.

Liturgical directives sent to all parishes have also suggested that on Good Friday the reading of the Passion of Our Lord should be by the celebrant and several lay lectors taking special roles in the narrative.

To heighten the sense of participation by the congregation, verses from the hymn "O Sacred Head" should be sung by the people at three appropriate places in the Passion account.

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