**April Chaplain’s Report**

***“…His commandments are not burdensome…”***

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! During Easter Season we remember in a very unique way one of the mysteries at the heart of the Christian faith, namely the Resurrection of the Lord. During the whole of the Lenten Season we prepared for this time by a number of different ways, particularly: acts of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Another way by which we are encouraged to prepare for Easter is confession. A priest friend of mine after a confession service this past Tuesday of Holy Week, described what happens in that moment in a way I’d never heard before. He said, and I am paraphrasing:

***“On the way to confession, the penitent who approaches the Sacrament weighed down by his sins is like unto Jesus walking on the way to Calvary to be crucified, weighed down by the cross. In confession, the penitent having confessed his sins with a sorrowful and broken (or contrite) heart, and making a firm resolution to amend his life, dies to himself and the world. He, abandoning himself to the Father’s care, relies no longer upon his own devices but only upon the mercy and love of him who can raise him up. Then, through the words absolution, granted by another “Father,” in and through the power granted him by the same crucified and risen Lord, the penitent is raised to new life.”***

God’s love and mercy are available to us at any time if only we turn back to him and seek it. This Sunday is Divine Mercy Sunday and Jesus in the Gospel for that celebration imparts to his apostles the ability to forgive sins: ***“Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”***

Through that Sacrament, Jesus, rather than condemning us, gives us the injunction he gave another repentant sinner in the Gospels: ***“go and sin no more.”*** But how? Jesus again shows us the way. By his *commandment* we are offered an easy and sure way by which we might persevere in the life he offers us.

Jesus says in the Gospel of John, ***“you are my friends if you do what I command you.”*** Whether we say it out loud or it is only tacitly understood, any real relationship – especially any true friendship – worth its salt, makes demands upon us. The beautiful thing about Jesus’ demands is that they actually make us freer to live and love than if we followed our own way.

John in his letter teaches us: ***“In this way we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome…”*** The law of God is a gift and a blessing. The longest Psalm in the Bible, Psalm 119 consisting of 176 verses, is a song of praise solely for God’s law!

To live the love of God in this Easter season and remain steadfast in the Lord’s call to ***“go and sin no more”*** we’d do well to brush up on the merciful gift God has given us in His law. As Catholics, especially as Knights who swear to being Practical Catholics in fairly public fashion, we must be committed not only to the defense of that law but to living and sharing that law with others.

The first step is being familiar with that law ourselves. Remember, *conscience* is a that special faculty and gift from God by which a man may judge an act to be good and do it or evil and avoid it. As such, the conscience and it’s being properly formed in God’s law given in Scripture and tradition are essential to his coming to attain Salvation on the last day. If we ignore this important gift and its proper development, we do harm not only to ourselves but others around us. Take the time and encounter or re-encounter God’s saving law afresh. His commandments are not burdensome!

**Practical Tips:**

***1) Consult an Examination of Conscience***

***2) Take a look at the Catechism of the Catholic Church Part III: Life in Christ or Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church.***

* ***Catechism, Part III:*** [***http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\_INDEX.HTM***](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM)
* ***Compendium:*** [***http://www.vatican.va/roman\_curia/pontifical\_councils/justpeace/documents/rc\_pc\_justpeace\_doc\_20060526\_compendio-dott-soc\_en.html***](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html)

***3) Pick a contemporary issue and study it deeply from a contemporary and Catholic Perspective. Esp. Hot-button issues.***

* *E.g. Homosexuality, Trans-Gender Persons, Abortion, Immigration*

***4) Join a Bible Study***

Some parishes offer Bible Study groups for a fuller exposure to the scriptures as a group. At St. Robert’s two men’s groups exist on 2nd and 4th Tuesday nights (7:00PM) and Saturday mornings at (7:00AM). Men gather to pray and reflect on the coming Sunday’s Gospel

**Coming Up:**

***April***

* Divine Mercy Sunday – April 8, 2018
  + *Special Plenary Indulgence* available to those who:
    - in any church or chapel, in a spirit that is completely detached from the affection for a sin, even a venial sin, take part in the prayers and devotions held in honor of Divine Mercy
    - **or**, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed or reserved in the tabernacle, recite the Our Father and the Creed, adding a devout prayer to the merciful Lord Jesus (e.g. Merciful Jesus, I trust in you!")
    - *Also* must fulfill other normal conditions:
      * Sacramental Confession (within 20 days before or after indulgenced act)
      * Eucharistic Communion (on day or days before or after)
      * Prayer for Intention of Holy Father (Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be may suffice)
* Solemnity of the Annunciation – April 9, 2018
  + Day of Prayer for the Unborn: Pray especially for the unborn on this day and for their protection.
* World Day of Prayer for Vocations – April 22, 2018
  + Pray especially for current vocations (from St. Robert’s, Benjamin Speranza) and future vocations!

***May***

* Ascension Thursday – May 10, 2018
  + Holy Day of Obligation
* Mother’s Day – May 13, 2018
  + Pray especially for present mothers and those expecting. Remember those women in crisis pregnancy situations and their families.
* Pentecost Sunday – May 20, 2018