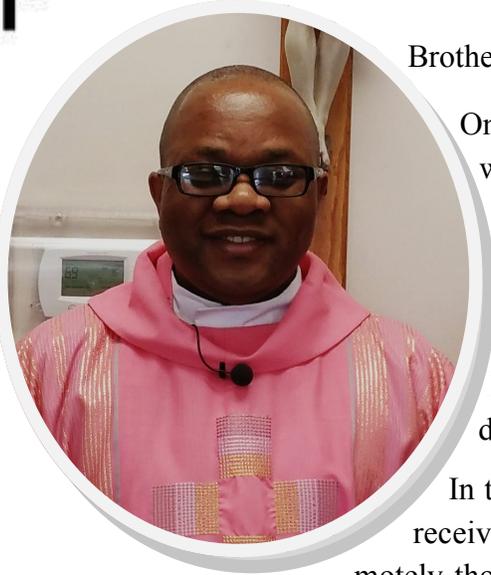


FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**



Brothers and Sisters in Christ; Grace and peace!

On this Fourth Sunday of lent, Holy Mother Church reinvigorates us with a boost of joy that liturgically brings our thoughts to the Resurrection. This year's "Laetare Sunday" (rejoice!) approaches during a very challenging time in the history of the world as the fast spreading coronavirus advances globally. This said, we still have been gifted with the ability to rejoice as Christians and people of hope. Even amongst our six -week penitential season, each Sunday is an occasion of great hope and joy!

In the Book of Samuel, the most insignificant of Jesse's sons, David, receives a remarkable anointing as second King of Israel. No one remotely thought that the young David would warrant such an honor. In the way that we can be so very blind in our perceptions, does this not point us to look to God for help? In the second reading we observe the darkness-light motif with St. Paul as he reminds Christians in Ephesus to specifically "learn what is pleasing to the Lord", to avoid any works of darkness and stay in the light of Christ.

With today's Gospel reading, we see Jesus as he leaves the Temple in the company of His disciples. He comes upon a beggar -- a man who has been blind from birth. Jesus says to His disciples, "He was born blind so that the works of God may be displayed in him... I must carry out the work of the one who sent me" (Jn. 9:3-4). Is it possible that the blind man stands for all of us, made a new creation by Christ's saving power? In an action that recalls the creation story from Genesis when God forms man out of clay, Jesus spits on the ground, makes mud with the saliva, and with resolve, spreads the mud on the man's eyes giving him the gift of sight.

Jesus thus teaches us the necessity of opening the eyes of the mind by faith; He cautions those who pretend to see the truth. And for those who acknowledge their blindness, the Lord promises clear vision. The most unlikely person in this reading, the blind man, receives the light of faith in Jesus, while the clerically oriented, law-educated Pharisees remain spiritually blind. We pray that our Lenten prayers and sacrifices may serve to heal our spiritual blindness, so that we can move forward this second half of Lent with generosity in our penance, prayer and almsgiving, by eradicating the blind spots in our culture today: materialism, the culture of death and violence, discrimination based on prejudice, insensitivity to the needs of the poor and injustices around the world. Amen.

Joyous Sunday!