

Today Isaiah describes God saying to us, “*See, I am doing something new! ...do you not perceive it?*” (Is. 43) Then we hear St. Paul saying he has not yet reached perfect maturity in Christ but presses onward, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead “*in hope that I might possess it.*” (Phil. 3)

Lent offers the opportunity to hear these words anew and to reflect on our own baptismal invitation to new life in Christ Jesus. How vibrant is my response right now? In my busyness and with so much suffering all around, am I losing heart? Or making time—even just a few moments a day—to let God’s love embrace me where I am, exactly as I am today?

The 5th Sunday of Lent was the day we used to cover up all the pictures and statues in the church to emphasize that we are getting close to the Triduum and Easter. As a child, having given up candy for Lent, this *was* a sign of hope—at least hope for the basket of candy coming soon!

John’s Gospel today offers a sign of much deeper hope in the story of the woman caught in adultery. The law prescribed stoning as punishment for this sin. They brought her before Jesus to entrap him. Would he follow the law or would they finally have real cause to condemn him? His response? “*Let the one who is without sin among you cast the first stone at her.*” Who among us is without sin? All had to walk away. Then Jesus’ response to the woman whose sin was exposed to all? The same as his response to every sinner he encountered during his public life: love and merciful forgiveness, no strings attached. Jesus is, indeed, “*something new.*”

So this week, let us ask ourselves: “*Am I willing to accept the unconditional love and forgiveness that Jesus offers me today? And am I willing—as I strive to become more like Him—to offer this same kind of love, mercy and forgiveness to everyone who has offended me or my family or my country?*”

This is the challenge today’s Gospel presents to us.

Now have a few items I would like to inform you:

1. We congratulate one of our own, Fr. Earl Fernandez, a priest of the Archdiocese, as the Holy Father has appointed him the Bishop of the Diocese of Columbus. His consecration will be May 31 in Columbus.
2. Beginning Divine Mercy Sunday, April 24, we are allowed to distribute both the consecrated hosts and precious blood at all masses. We will start out slow with offering

two cups at each mass on the weekend. We may run out as we determine the correct amount of wine to use. At First Communion masses we will not distribute from the cup, however, the children will be trained to do so and at the discretion of their parents may receive from the cup at future masses.

3. At St. Michael cemetery on 66 you have probably noticed a stone altar looking structure. This week we are going to receive the statue of the Pieta which will set on that structure. If you look at the 13th Station of the Cross, you see Mary holding the crucified body of our Lord. That is what the Pieta statue looks like. This project was begun as Jacob Sherman's Eagle Scout project, the statue was donated by SM parishioners who wish to remain anonymous. Jacob will complete the landscaping this spring.
4. In regard to the Beacons of Light, Family of Parishes:
 - a. Fr. Kohn is having a Holy Hour of Prayer for our Family of Parishes next Sunday, April 10, from 7:00p to 8:00p at Ss. Peter & Paul Church. All parishes will participate.
 - b. Fr. Kohn, our new family of parishes pastor, has met with the business managers of his parishes, and will be meeting with the pastoral councils and staffs in the coming weeks.
 - c. Fr. Kohn is working out the logistics of where the four priests will be living the Family of Parishes.
 - d. Fr. Kohn is also working on a Mass schedule for the four priests which more than likely will be rotation of the four priests on the weekend. As of now, the mass schedule for the weekend will not change for either of our parishes.
5. In regard to the incident that happened at the Jr. Hi. Retreat a week ago Saturday. I ask all parishioners to be very careful of what you are saying without knowing the truth of the matter. In other parlance, we call this gossip and for some of you the term you like to use "fake news". The problem with gossip and fake news is that it usually is untrue and can be harmful to the reputation of another and ultimately sinful. I understand the incident is being investigated and no one should be making judgments or calling out one another. What we should be doing is praying for the boys and the families involved, and maybe all our young boys that they have role models in their lives that they can model Christian values as Christian boys.