

THE PASTOR'S POINTS- June 10, 2018

We all know the expression 'saved by the bell.' Anyone know where it came from?

Boxing, for obvious reasons. But the origin supposedly lies with the Horse Guard Parade in London. One night, during the reign of Queen Victoria, a guard was accused of being asleep on duty. He denied the charge and 'claimed he heard the main bell of Big Ben chime 13 times at midnight, instead of the usual twelve.' Since the charge against the soldier was so serious, the clock mechanism was checked and 'it was discovered a cog was out of line and Big Ben would indeed chime 13 times instead of 12. On that evidence, the guard was freed – and truly saved by the bell.' (Albert Jack, Red Herrings and White Elephants: The Origins of the Phrases We Use Everyday, p. 214-1215)

We have purchased a bell to begin our liturgy. In the Catholic tradition, the bell has functioned as the voice of God, calling the people of God to prayer. It's been used in cathedrals and churches and monasteries and convents throughout the world. To this day, even when monks are out working in the fields, when the bell rings, they stop what they are doing in order to pray.

Often bells are inscribed, for example a church bell in Wisconsin has this inscription: "To the bath and to the table, to the prayers and to the Word, I call every seeking soul."

There were three bells at the seminary I attended, and all of them were given names – the largest was called the Redeemer Bell, named so for Jesus & Mary. The other two were named Peter and Paul. The Redeemer Bell's inscription was: "I sound an echo of the Redeemer's voice, winging, as it were, over the waves of time.....warming, encouragement, joy."

I hope that this bell will be a reminder that we come together at the invitation of God Himself, calling out to us in love.

We'll have the cantor announce the opening hymn, then we'll ring the bell, then begin to sing, so that the last thing we hear before we lift our voices in praise is the voice of God calling us to prayer.

- Father John



The bell was designed by Tom Torrens of Sculpture Designs, Inc. in Gig Harbor, WA.