

THE PASTOR'S POINTS- Easter 2019 (April 21, 2019)

HAPPY EASTER! If you are joining us for the first time, WELCOME! If you are joining us again, WELCOME BACK! If you're not sure why you are here, WELCOME ANYWAY! Please know that you are always welcome at St. Andrew's.

William White tells this story: A teacher was speaking with a group of children, and a soapmaker interrupted him in order to embarrass him. "How can you claim that religion is good and valid when there is so much suffering and evil in the world? What good are all the books and sermons that your religion has produced?"

The Teacher motioned to a small child in the crowd. "This is Eric," the Teacher said. "He is three. He is also dirty. I ask you, what good is soap when Eric and hundreds of children like him are dirty? How can you pretend that soap is effective?"

"What a foolish argument," the soapmaker protested. "If soap is to be effective it must be used."

"Precisely," the Teacher answered. "If the teachings of our Master are to be effective, they must be used."

Whether you are here in a Catholic Church for the first time or the umpteenth time – your presence is an invitation from God, whether you may realize it or not. (Sometimes those invitations come in funny ways – your mom said 'We're paying your college tuition and you WILL come to Easter Mass with the family!', or 'Grandma is going to be here for Easter and we are ALL going to Mass. And that's that!') God has endless ways to invite us into His love.

William O'Malley, SJ, came up with a list of basic essentials to our following of Christ, regardless of our denominational flavor. Perhaps these might resonate with your spring-infused soul on this Easter day.

1. Jesus is the embodiment of God. Deny that, and you can be a saint, but not a Christian. Somehow – don't ask how – the divine Word focused Himself into the man Jesus Christ. If you want the definitive insight into God's personality, what God likes and doesn't like, look at Jesus.
2. Jesus/God died in order to rise, so that He could uproot, once for all, our fear of death, to prove that life is not ultimately futile or meaningless. And He rose to share with us the divine aliveness, to engraft us into the life of God. We are no longer just the human family; we are part of the Trinity family.
3. To become part of the Trinity family we must give up the values of 'the world' (me first!) and take on the values of 'the kingdom' (them first: God and neighbor). Our choices are based on motives 180 degrees away from the motives of monopoly capitalism. We can sum up the gospel in one word: forgiveness. Forgiveness of others AS God has repeatedly forgiven us.
4. We celebrate our community dedicated to service at a meal. We are a community dedicated to healing, who are energized, fed and sent forth from a meal at which

Jesus/God focuses Himself beyond time and space into bits of bread and cups of wine and thence into us.

Finally, if you have any interest in looking into our Catholic faith, please feel free to contact us. No pressure, just invitation. You can journey with us for as long (or as short) as you wish.

Thank you for joining us this Easter. May you leave behind you a string of empty tombs!
HAPPY EASTER!

Father John