

+ 21 March 2012

My dear Brothers and Sisters:

May the peace of the Lord and the love of His Mother be with you and your communities!

This past Sunday was the Fourth Sunday in Lent. As it marks the mid-point of our Lenten journey, it is known as Laetare Sunday (Latin for 'to rejoice'). Indeed, we rejoice for our Salvation is close at hand! But, given that we still have a few more weeks to go, the opening hymn encouraged us to keep going: "Rejoice, Jerusalem...exult and be replenished."

Having spent the first weeks of our spring training focusing our attention on the things that matter – through the disciplines of fasting, prayer, and alms-giving – we'll turn our attention to a few 'habits' for the rest of our journey to Easter.

TURNING FROM DARKNESS

This past Sunday, we also heard a familiar Gospel passage: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son... [not] to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him." We all know how it begins; but do you know how that passage ends? St. John the Evangelist continues with a 'verdict': "light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light."

In just a few days, we will celebrate the Annunciation of the Lord, when Mary offered her willing cooperation, her unqualified 'yes' to God's plan. She could have easily run to the darkness of her own doubt, of her fear, of her unworthiness. Instead, she trusted in the Lord and in the compassion of her family and community. Mary chose Light. Do we?

THE EMBRACE OF COMMUNITY

The gift of our communal life is that no matter how broken we are as individuals, together we are whole. When Christ spread his arms between heaven and earth, he gathered us all into his redemptive act. When we return to that embrace, when we gather in community, we are brought from the darkness of shame and doubt into the light of reassurance and joy.

The challenge of that embrace is that we journey toward God as a people of faith, a community of the baptized. In life's difficult moments, do we retreat to the darkness of

our personal doubt and fear? Or, do we bring our brokenness to the clarifying comfort of our communities?

A MIRROR OF GOD, A SPECTACLE OF SAINTS

You've heard me say that God does not want our remorse for Lent. Indeed, God wants our conversion. God wants us to gaze, once again, upon the face of Love and reflect it outward. We must continue to work hard this Lent at being that face for each other, at being a mirror of God's Love.

I trust that we've all done a significant amount of introspection these past weeks, but it's time for a little group exercise. This week, spend a little time in prayer with your community, your family, a friend, or a co-worker. Thank God for the gift our lives in community, as a spectacle of saints: a simple people who gather as faithful witnesses to glory of the cross, a mirror of God's great Love for a world deeply in need.

May we choose Light with the resounding 'yes' of our Mother. May we be a mirror of God's Love, a spectacle of saints.

Assuring you a remembrance in my prayers and asking God's every blessing upon you, may I remain:

Yours in Christ,

Rudy Reyes Jr.

p.s. This is the fifth (of eight) installments in our Lenten Series which will conclude on Easter Wednesday. I welcome and invite your feedback and conversation; be in touch!

Rudy Reyes Jr.

President

Marianist Lay Network of North America

The Marianist Centre | 1341 N. Delaware Avenue, Suite 301

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19125-4300 U.S.A.

Office: 574.631.0694 | **Facsimile:** 215.606.6899

eMail: rreyes@stmarytx.edu | **Web:** <http://www.marianist.com/lay>

Faites ce qui est nécessaire pour obtenir et maintenir la paix de l'âme;

cherchez Dieu seul et son bon-plaisir.

-- B. Guillaume Joseph Chaminade

Please consider SUPPORTING THE MLNNA.