

As we celebrate Easter during the liturgical period called the Triduum, I think of many elements of this solemn time.

First and most important is the theological dimension of this moment: Jesus has overcome sin and death by his journey into Jerusalem to offer himself on the Cross, the most potent symbol of our Christian religion. The result is that we have become a people of life. We see this as the tomb is empty on Easter Day: sin and death do not have the final say. Also, liturgically, our churches are adorned: on Good Friday, we have the penitential color of purple, drapping the cross to be venerated; on Easter morning, we will see white lilies. So beautiful is our artistic expression in worship. Also, we will welcome catechumens (preparing months) who become full members of our faith, receiving the sacraments: this being the fruit of evangelization as mission disciples (Pope Francis' *The Joy of the Gospel, Evangelii Gaudium*).

In all of this, I focus in on the role of the Eucharist, since we will have our National Eucharistic Revival this summer in Indianapolis ([eucharisticrevival.org](http://eucharisticrevival.org)). On Holy Thursday, the church remembers and celebrates Christ's institution of the Eucharist. Our Blessed Lord went to Jerusalem not to escape from the harsh realities of life but to overcome them. He wept (*Dominus flevit*) over the city as God's faithful struggled to remain steadfast to the covenant and he took up the cross to suffer and die for humanity. He gave himself, he knew pain and suffering and he knew others went through the same. Beforehand though, he wanted to be with his apostles in a particular way,, share fellowship, and offer to them the gift of his body and blood in the context of a meal, and as our annual Catholic Appeal ([annualcatholicappeal.com](http://annualcatholicappeal.com)) asserts, in this, we are "together at the table."

In his insightful *The Bread of Eternal Life* (Catholic Publishing Co., Inc.,1982), my predecessor Fr. Magyar notes that Jesus was not distant from people, but through the Eucharist, "our Lord refuses to be excluded from the lives of humans, especially as it refers to trials and sufferings. He is compassionately and very much with the innocently suffering, inhumanely exploited, unjustly and relentlessly persecuted, p. 203)."

Cannot we say that so much suffering today, as I see it, is based on wounded hearts and souls, more than physical ailments, though the latter cannot be downplayed. In truth, our world, and here I reflect most especially on western civilization we have lost our spiritual roots and we thereby experience dreaded consequences. As our Eucharistic Revival website points out "our world is hurting. We all need healing, yet many of us are separated from the very source

of our strength, and Jesus invites us to return to the source and summit of our faith." Jesus is with us, the Eucharist is the Real Presence, and it is medicine for our troubled souls. And it is alright to believe!

Others are embracing this spirit of solidarity with the marginalized, though perhaps not from a church-based perspective. This Easter my prayers are for in particular "The Hungary Helps Program ([hungaryhelps.gov.hu](http://hungaryhelps.gov.hu))" which is the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary.

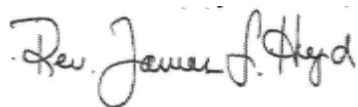
Tristan Azbej writes "we are not abandoning people suffering...our mission is to ensure rapid, practical and local assistance to the most vulnerable people." Such humanitarian charity is dedicated to alleviating the sufferings of others around the world, like in Africa, and is, one can say, akin to the spirit of the Eucharist for such a sacrament as Fr. Magyar notes does not exclude us from the suffering of others, though the church has a different *raison d'être* while governmental work is more humanistic and secular-orientated, though at times, influenced by faith.

Recently, I was so proud of our St. Stephen of Mission Church as we welcomed and supported Deacon Leo Okonkwo, a colleague of Chicago's evangelist Nick Costello; both have built a school in Nigeria as part of their program called "Home to Enhance African Life ([www.HealNigeria.Org](http://www.HealNigeria.Org)).

They are known in the mission work of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

A Happy and Blessed Easter to one and all. I pray that the Blessed Lord fills you with his deep and abiding love, especially as you may encounter Him in the Eucharist. May our renewed devotion to this sacrament on the altar testify to all the world that we do care and we are in reaching out to the needy.

Father James

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. James J. Hynd".

**Holy Week ceremonies:**

- **Holy Thursday, March 28th - at 7 PM** - Mass of the Last Super, Prayer and adoration
- **Good Friday, March 29th - at 7 PM** - Solemn Liturgy
- **Holy Saturday, March 30th - at 7 PM** - Easter Vigil and Mass, Blessing of food
- **Sunday, March 31st - Easter Mass at 10 AM.**