

THE SHEPHERDS WALKING STICK

The Children's Rosary in our parish returned to their regular prayer schedule which is the second Tuesday of the month. Hopefully our situation will continue to improve, and there will be no more interruptions as we slowly revive parish community activities. Last Tuesday, I told the kids that I am strongly convinced that their faithfulness in praying the Rosary is one of the reasons why nobody in the community perished in the pandemic. They have prayed via Zoom; they have prayed even if the attendance has to be limited to two families only. In heaven, it will be revealed to us how powerful are their prayers in keeping the members of the community safe..... God willing too, we might be able to have First Communion for our children on June 6 which is the Solemnity of the Most Precious Body and Blood of Our Lord, other wise known as Corpus Christi. Patti Rothenburger is on the process of contacting the parents of the 20 kids or so who have started their sacramental preparation before the pandemic erupted. Obviously, the resumption of the preparation will now depend more on the parents. They might be required to buy some materials and teach their children themselves. Indeed, our current situation is forcing the parents to consider seriously their role as first catechists for their children and to really turn the home into a domestic church. So, I hope and pray that the parents are up for the challenge. Only those children who have finished the required sacramental prep will be able to join the First Communion..... I've been talking a lot about Confession recently. But some might be asking, "Why not confess our sins directly to God?" Well, firstly, the Sacrament of Confession or Penance is the normative (the normal and ordinary) way to receive forgiveness from God. Christ himself instituted this sacrament. Of course, one may confess one's sins directly to God and ask for forgiveness for venial sins. One may also ask forgiveness directly from God for committed mortal sins. However, to be able to receive divine forgiveness in this way, one must have perfect contrition for mortal sins committed. Perfect contrition means being sorry for sins out of love for God who must be

loved for his own sake. Less than this is imperfect contrition which is otherwise known as attrition. An example of attrition is being sorry for sins because one is afraid of divine punishment (i.e., fear rather than love is the motive). Attrition suffices in the sacrament of Penance. This means that one is assured of God's forgiveness through the sacrament even though one's contrition is imperfect. Meanwhile, perfect contrition is required from one who wants forgiveness without the sacrament. But, how can one be sure that one's contrition is perfect? No one can really. In fact, unwillingness to receive the sacrament (if one is able) could be a sign that there is still some pride left which renders one's contrition imperfect..... I will be posting sometime this week the schedule for Holy Week. But, I would like to announce now that on Holy Monday, March 29 @ 7 PM, the parish will have a penitential service wherein I will be inviting another priest to help me hear Confessions..... Finally, since many of our parishioners are immigrants from the Philippines (including yours truly, of course :-), I think it is worth mentioning that the Philippines Church is celebrating the culmination of the year-long jubilee commemorating the arrival of the Catholic faith in the country 500 years ago. Aside the local celebrations, Pope Francis will lead the celebration with a Mass at the Vatican today, Sunday, March 14 at 10:00 AM (Rome time). For those who do not know, Catholicism in the Philippines began with the arrival of the 16-th century Portuguese explorer, Ferdinand Magellan, who was leading a Spanish expedition from 1519 to 1522 to find a western route to the East Indies. They landed in the Philippines on March 16, 1521. It is believed that the expedition crew celebrated the first Mass on Filipino soil on March 31, 1521 at Limasawa Island in the middle part of the archipelago. Later on, some 800 natives were baptized to form the first Catholic community.