

*During Lent the Pastor's Letters will be from our Holy Deacons.*

The entrance antiphon for this Sunday reads, "Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her." In Latin the first words are, "Laetare Jerusalem..." Laetare Sunday is the half-way point between Ash Wednesday and Easter. The Church expresses hope and joy in the midst of our Lenten fasts and penances. We hear a different tone in the readings this Sunday reminding us to rejoice in all the goodness and blessings of the Lord. The clergy vestments are the color rose, a stark change from the purple we have been accustomed to for the last few weeks. Holy Mother Church give us this day as a reminder of the coming glory of Easter in a few weeks. So, enjoy this special day and REJOICE!

During our Lenten journey we have been engaged in our spiritual exercises of fasting, almsgiving and prayer. When I was a student here at OLR, the school used to have the Rice Bowl collection project to teach the youth about almsgiving. Some families may change their menus to simpler meals during Lent. Some would set aside specific time for the family to engage in deeper intentional prayer time. These are wonderful practices to remind us of our Lord's fasting in the desert for forty days. But maybe there can be more!

We can mirror the Liturgical Calendar in our homes, our Domestic Church throughout the year. This is easy to do so during Advent leading to Christmas with the family Advent wreath. This is beautiful to do so. But what about Lent – what can we do in our homes? How about today, buying a beautiful bouquet of flowers to set on the family dining room table to remember Laetare Sunday. Have a special family dinner Sunday evening – a feast like the father had for the prodigal son. While today is a special Sunday during Lent, let us not forget that we will be entering into Passiontide next Sunday. Another way we can imitate the Church in our homes is to drape our crucifixes and Holy Images with purple cloths. This will be a visual reminder of the upcoming solemn days of the Passion of our Lord. Then on Good Friday, remove the cloths to expose the image of our crucified Lord and venerate Him in prayer. We can have a blessed and fruitful Lent, the more we immerse ourselves by small reminders in our homes, in our personal Domestic Churches.

Deacon Eric Bricco