

Dear Members of Sacred Heart Church,

Growing up (long, long ago), when the season of spring was beginning and we were certain that the frozen winter ground had finally thawed out, it was time for planting scallions. My father would lead us, with a basket of bulbs, to our garden in the back of the yard to clean up, turn over and prepare the ground. Then, we would push a stick into the ground, making an opening large enough to place the bulb in and cover it up. We would plant bulb after bulb, row after row, and, then, we would watch and wait for the first bright green stalk to push up and out through the earth or through a light covering of snow, the last of the season, appropriately called “onion snow”. All summer long, fresh scallions would enhance our salads, soups and supper dishes. Very often, on Sundays, there would be a large water glass full of delicious scallions to eat and enjoy, as is.

In the springtime season of Lent, Jesus comes to our cold, barren hearts and, with the base of His Cross, makes an opening to plant His Love. Then, He waits and watches as His awakening Love takes root and pushes up and out bringing joy and gratitude to all of our Easter gatherings. Our A-cycles readings proclaimed this Lent at our 9:30 Sunday Mass for the benefit of our candidates for full initiation show us that for Jesus to plant He must be very close to us – “sitting near” (the Woman at the Well), “bending down” (the Man Born Blind) and “peering in” (Lazarus in his tomb). In these final weeks of Lent, let us take the time to behold what is already growing within our hearts as they did – Healing, Enlightenment, and New Life. When the Risen Lord calls us by name to “come forth” at Easter, may we bring His glorious Love, fully grown, to enrich and enhance our Paschal celebration and our Eucharistic feast.

“To you, O Lord, we cry and pray; bless this sprouting seed,  
Strengthen it in the gentle movement of soft winds,  
Refresh it with the dew of heaven, and let it grow to full maturity  
For the good of body and soul.” (Rituale Romanum)

A blessed Passiontide,  
*Father John*