



The Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist

Post Office Box 441 / 507 Federal Street
Milton, Delaware 19968



www.saintjohnsmilton.org

The Rev. Thomas M. White

Holy Week and Easter 2017

Dear Member and Friend of the St. John the Baptist Community,

An ad on TV last night got me reflecting. It was by one of the companies that for a price will check your DNA. A swab of your saliva sent off for analysis and in a couple of weeks you will know if your ancestry really is German and not Irish, Slovenian rather than Greek. What is your identity? To whom are you related? For \$99 now you can know. I decided to save my money. For who I am, and who you are, and to whom we're related, is already known.

Our essential identity and ancestry were given to us by God in that moment, for most of us so many years ago, when at the font of Baptism, by water and the Spirit, God, King of the universe, said this about each of us: "I have called you by name, you are mine!" (Isaiah 43:1), children of the heavenly Father. That is who we are! Wow! God is our Papa! Now, that's an ancestry!

But, there's more! God decided to come to this earth in human form, born of Mary, to show humankind God's heart of perfect love. Truly, in Jesus "the greatest story ever told" was lived out for us and our salvation! But, the crux and core of this greatest story, the greatest story within the greatest story, the story of the unimaginable lengths God goes to show us his incomprehensible love, unfolds anew for us beginning this Sunday, Palm Sunday, and climaxes with Easter's Son-rise!

In the span of seven days, God moves believers from darkness to unquenchable light, from sin's bondage to the freedom of divine forgiveness, and makes the shadow of death not a canyon, with no way out, but a valley through which the Redeeming Christ leads us into everlasting life in the Father's House. In the baptismal waters we participated in Jesus' death and resurrection, the life of sin drowned and then we came up from the water to the new life in Christ. Christ became our brother, and you and I family! That's our identity!

I invite you and plead with you to walk in the footsteps of Jesus as this greatest story within the greatest story unfolds in this week before us called holy:

† **Sunday of the Palms and Reading of St. Matthew's Passion Mass, 10 AM**

We will gather in the parish hall to hear the Palm Sunday Gospel and then process into the sanctuary carrying our palms.

† **Maunder Thursday Mass, 7 PM**, ending with the stripping of the altar commemorating Jesus in the hands of his captors.

A **soup and salad dinner** will be served in the parish hall at **5:30 PM**.

†**Good Friday:**

Stations of the Cross, 12 Noon

Good Friday Mass with the Reading of St. John's Passion and Holy

Eucharist from the Reserved Sacrament, 7 PM

† **Easter Day Festival Mass, 10 AM**

The Sunday School children will sing and then enjoy an Easter egg hunt.

Our Lenten Fast Offerings received for Outreach Ministries.

The services of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter are one, together forming a continuous service, the Easter Triduum, like three verses of a hymn, with no benediction pronounced until the end of Easter's Mass. I encourage you to celebrate your faith by faithfully attending these sacred services.

Also, the Milton Community of Churches is conducting an **Easter Sunrise Service at the Milton Park on Easter Sunday, April 16, at 6:15 AM**. Chris Myers and I will be participating. You are invited and, after the service, to enjoy fellowship and a continental breakfast at Goshen Hall, 114 Federal Street.

Don't forget **Bible Study** each Tuesday evening, **7 PM**, as we explore the appointed Scripture readings for the upcoming Sunday.

Calling needed volunteers! The **Spring Clean-up Day** will be on **Saturday, April 22, at 9 AM**. And—I'm excited!—the **Landscaping Day**, when shrubs will be planted at the entrance to the church and the area in front of the parish hall, and perennials in the Memorial Garden, is **Saturday, May, 20, at 9 AM**.

St. John the Baptist's **Book Club** will meet again on Monday, **May 1, 3 PM**, in the parish hall. The book that will be discussed is "Miles to Go" by Richard Paul Evans. You are invited!

Again this year, our parish will be participating in Milton's Town-wide **Yard Sale, Saturday, May 6**. Your contributions of yard sale items are welcomed!

In closing, know that every day I pray for you, thanking God for you. I am richly blessed to serve a community of faith with such awesome folks as you!

My heartfelt wishes to each of you for a most Blessed Holy Week and an inexpressibly Joyous Easter! Because of Easter we are God's forever! Our "Alleluias!!" have no end!! Alleluia!!

Yours in Christ,
Father Tom