

Companions of Christ

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The Lord is Risen!_ Indeed He is Risen! Happy Easter everyone. What a joyous season this is. As I study towards the priesthood and as I spend more time reflecting on the life of our Church, the more amazed I am at Her wisdom regarding fasting and feasting. The Church gives us the 40 days of Lent to fast and pray and reflect upon our need (our hunger/thirst, if you will) for the Lord. Then, when this is over, we're given a 50 day Easter Feast! I like that; it adds up just fine in my book! St. Augustine and the other Church Fathers look upon the whole fifty days of Easter as "one feast day." The first eight days of Easter are celebrated as the dawn of Easter morn and is reflected in the daily Mass readings. The following days of Easter celebrate the rest of the Easter day. Of course, we Christians are an Easter people. That is, we live our lives in light of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and look forward to our own victorious resurrection on the last day. May you all be filled with this Easter joy.

The Companions of Christ have celebrated and are celebrating Easter in a most appropriate way. During the Triduum, we took a little retreat time in our home to quietly reflect upon the mysteries of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection. The Companions took part in the Liturgical celebrations at the Nativity of Our Lord Catholic Church here in St. Paul during this time. I actively participated at Nativity as the Master of Ceremonies. My job was to assist the altar boys during the services. This was a breeze since the boys are extremely well trained and very reliable.

After the Easter Vigil Mass on Saturday, the Brotherhood headed out for beautiful Birchwood, Wisconsin for some rest, relaxation, and Easter celebration at a friend's cabin. It was a very restful time.

On Easter Wednesday, April 22nd, St. Paul's Outreach celebrated its second annual Christian Seder. This celebration is an Easter commemoration of the Jewish Passover. In many languages the word for Easter is "Passover." This reveals a truth often unrecognized by Christians. Easter is simply the Christian Passover. The Passover feast celebrated annually by the Jewish people is fulfilled in Christ's sacrificial death and victorious resurrection. Our observance of the Passover can thus teach us the true significance of Christ's redeeming sacrifice and provide a fitting way to celebrate the events which have brought us freedom. The evening was very formal and began (after hours of preparation) with prayers and readings from the Old and New Testaments reminding us of our heritage. Ceremonial foods of bitter herbs, unleavened bread, wine, and haroseth (a mixture of nuts and fruits) were our initial foods. A candle was lit to remind us of Christ's presence among us followed by more prayers, a blessing over the meal and then the festive meal. Our main meal consisted of roast lamb, asparagus, twice-baked potatoes, and exquisite desserts. The evening was capped off by entertainment, singing, Jewish dancing and lots of fellowship. About seventy people participated. Among our honored guests for the evening was Msgr. Clarence Steiner, Rector Emeritus of Nativity, who shared with us how edified he was to see so much joy in the members of St. Paul's Outreach. This joy, he remarked, is a visible sign of the true Christian. I was greatly honored by this remark. The events of this evening were celebrated at Nativity Grade School.