

PASTOR'S COLUMN

Old Metairie Fest Thank-Yous, and Happy Easter!

Old Metairie Fest Thank-Yous. My first day at St. Francis Parish was August 10, 2018. A group of women asked for a meeting on August 9, the day before my official start date: they were the Organizing Committee for the Old Metairie Fest, five school moms, Patty Cadella, Jennifer Kadden, Heather Trimber, Hayley Bumpas and Ashley Lebeuf. These five women worked tirelessly over the past year to prepare for this year's festival, and it was phenomenal. From the rain-free weather (thank you, God) to the delicious food and desserts, drinks, raffles, auction items, games, activities, performances, Bucktown Allstars, Festival T-shirts, and Western décor – everything was marvelous and thoroughly enjoyable.

A word of thanks also to Barbara Martin, Deacon Jack, the School Teachers and Staff, the Men's Club, the KCs, the Daughters, our School Parents, Sponsors, Donors, Vendors and Volunteers. I loved every minute of the Festival and can't wait till we do it again next year.

Happy Easter! Before I entered seminary, I was a homeowner. I had a flower garden in front of my house. One day as I was weeding the garden, I was stung by a caterpillar. Almost instantly, there was a burning sensation on my hand and blisters formed. I don't remember what I did to medicate the pain, but I do remember it was very uncomfortable. I also remember deciding that I definitely did not like caterpillars.

Some weeks later, however, I was outside my house admiring the flowers in the garden when a butterfly began fluttering around the flowers. I was struck by the color, grace and beauty of the butterfly, and it hit me: that beautiful butterfly might be the very same caterpillar that stung me and caused me such pain.

The story of Jesus' death and resurrection from the dead is infinitely richer than the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly, but nature does reveal hints of the great transformation that we celebrate at Easter: Jesus, barbarously tortured to death, broke the bonds of sin and death and rose in a new and glorified body to live forever. Jesus now offers the gift of resurrection after death to each of us.

Easter is the greatest feast of our salvation. Because that is so, we don't celebrate Easter for a day but for 50 days, from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday. We have been given an unbelievable gift of salvation. Our part is to cooperate with the gift Jesus won for us so one day we can be with God in heaven forever. May we sing out to God in thanksgiving this Easter as we celebrate the greatest gift in history.

Fr. Thien and I and our Parish and School leadership and staff wish you and yours a most Blessed and Happy Easter.

Fr. Joe