Dear Parishioners,

I hope you are all keeping healthy and safe.

We are in the Easter Triduum a special time of reflection and prayer. Here are a few suggestions for you that will keep you focused and thinking about Easter. Also, below you will find a great cookie recipe and story for your family.

**Theme for Good Friday** would be SILENCE. Today we remember the death of Jesus. I would like to invite you to be silent for a little while during the time Jesus was crucified. By tradition Jesus died at 3:00 pm.

**Theme for Holy Saturday** would be a decorated candle at the center of your table. Light the candle in the evening. The lit candle will be a sign of the risen Christ. You will find below a recipe for Easter cookies. This is for children and this will be a good way to explain to the children the Easter story.

**Theme for Easter Sunday** will be water. Place a bowl of water on your table today, amidst all of the Easter eggs, flowers and trimmings. Bless the water with a prayer, then bless yourself with the water as a reminder of the new life that your Baptism brings to you, every day and all day.

Happy Easter!

If you would like to donate nonperishable foods for Ritter House, please leave them in the bride's room on the 19th of April, the Sunday after Easter.

Yours sincerely,
Fr. Jose Shaji
EASTER STORY COOKIES (For children)

To be made the evening before Easter

You need:

1 cup whole pecans
1 tsp. vinegar
3 egg whites
pinch of salt
1 cup sugar
Zipper baggie
wooden spoon
tape
Bible

Preheat oven to 300 degrees (This is very, very important – do not wait till you are half done with the recipe!)

Place pecan in zipper baggie and let children beat them with the wooden spoon to break into small pieces. Explain that after Jesus was arrested, He was beaten by the Roman soldiers. (Read John 19:1-3

Let each child smell the vinegar. Put 1 tsp. vinegar into mixing bowl. Explain that when Jesus was thirsty on the cross, He was given vinegar to drink. Read John 19:28-30

Add egg whites to vinegar. Eggs represent life. Explain that Jesus gave His life to give us life. Read John 10:10-11

Sprinkle a little salt into each child’s hand. Let them taste it and brush the rest into the bowl. Explain that this represents the salty tears shed by Jesus’ followers and the bitterness of our own sins. Read Lk. 23:27

So far, the ingredients are not very appetizing. Add 1 cup sugar. Explain that the sweetest part of the story is that Jesus died because He loves us. He wants us to know Him and belong to Him. Read Psalm 34:8 and Jn. 3:16

Beat with a mixer on high speed for 12 to 15 minutes until stiff peaks are formed. Explain that the color white represents the purity in God’s eyes of those whose sins have been cleansed by Jesus. Read Isaiah 1:18 and John 3:1-3

Fold in broken nuts. Drop by teaspoons onto wax paper covered cookie sheet. Explain that each mound represents the rocky tomb where Jesus’ body was laid. Read Mt. 27:57-60

Put the cookie sheet in the oven. Close the door and turn the oven OFF.

Give each child a piece of tape and seal the oven door. Explain that Jesus’ tomb was sealed. Read Mt. 27:65-66
GO TO BED! Explain that they may feel sad to leave the cookies in the oven overnight. Jesus’ followers were in despair when the tomb was sealed. Read Jn. 16:20 and 22.

On Easter morning, open the oven and give everyone a cookie. Notice the cracked surface and take a bite. The cookies are hollow! On the first Easter morning, Jesus’ followers were amazed to find the tomb open and empty.

**READ MT. 28:1-9**