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Dear Parishioners;

The psalm response from Easter Sunday morning is; “This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad.” During these days of pandemic, the call for those who have been given the gift of faith to rejoice and be glad can be a tall order.

I was in a store the other day, waiting in line to buy my essential pop and bag of chips, and I heard the woman at the till asking the person ahead of me how they were doing, just like they always do. And so as I waited my turn, I thought about what my answer should be. Of course, the woman at the till isn't my therapist (and no, I don't have one. But I probably could use one about now.) And then I remembered that I had gotten my vaccine, because I visit at the hospital and hospice, and I decided that getting the vaccine was my turning point in all of this.

The vaccine is the result of the miracle of modern medicine and it is the real hope that we have in our fight against the virus, and so I decided that it was from that gratitude and that hope that I would respond to the teller. And so when it was my turn to get served and I was asked how I was doing today, I said that I was doing great. I said something about how nice a day it was outside and how lucky I was to be able to buy my stuff.

And I recognized the teller's eagerness to join in that good spirit. And so I tried it again. And this time I tried to be more convincing. And again, the person at the till seemed to want to join in the rejoicing.

I can be as cranky as the next person. When the day comes that we don't have to wear a mask in the store without someone yelling at us, I am going to miss them. I get to walk around the store, anonymously buying all of the full fat and salty items I like so much, without having to be concerned

about what the other customers, who spent all their time in the produce aisle, might want to say to me.

I know this sounds a little paranoid, but it isn't easy being a minor celebrity. You never know who might be peering into your grocery basket. The mask lets me mumble to myself about the people entering the aisle from the wrong end or the group who decided to make the essential trip to Costco a family outing, all without fear of getting punched in the nose. I think many of us will have to relearn our shopping social skills when the time comes.

As I was saying, I think that the time has come for me to take the psalmist's call to rejoice and to be glad to heart. And you know, it works. Being positive and finding something to be grateful for is contagious. The last store I was in, I was asked how my day was going and I said it was going great. And I noticed that they had done some renovations and I thought that they had done a great job of it and so I told them so, and we had a nice conversation about what was good and right in the day.

Now, if that woman is like me, then I am sure that she felt good about that encounter. And you know what, as I walked away I didn't need her to feel any better for me to feel better. I had done my best to lead with rejoicing and gladness, and the reward from the Holy Spirit of a lighter heart was enough for me to try it again.

We may not have been in church for Easter, but we are Easter people nonetheless, and we need to make a conscious choice about the attitude we are going to lead with. Believe me, I am preaching to myself here but that is part of the process, thinking ahead and deciding who we want to be so that we fight against the temptation to sit in the shadows of negativity when the light of gladness is just over there, if we will choose the path of a people who have been saved in Jesus. And as St. Thomas Moore once asked; "Dear Lord, for the things I pray for, help me to work for." Good luck.

May God be gracious to us and bless us, now and forever.

Pat Monette/Pastor