

3rd Sunday of Easter – April 14/15, 2018 – Reflection

(Peter said to the people) ... "Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be wiped away."

(The Acts of the Apostles)

" ... we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one. He is expiation for our sins, and not for our sins only but for those of the whole world."

(The First Letter of John)

In the alumni newsletter I get from my alma mater, Assumption College, I read some months ago of the passing of a Mr. Tom Dunn, and I noted his death with sadness and a whispered prayer for the repose of his soul, but, seeing his name again after all these years since I was a youngster in college brought back a fond and grateful memory. So back when I was at the college, Mr. Dunn was Dean. In the spring of my freshman year, I went to my campus mail box one Friday afternoon and noticed among all the letters and flyers stuffed into the box one very official-looking piece of correspondence. I opened the envelope and read the enclosed letter which was written to inform me that I owed the college one thousand dollars payable upon receipt of said letter for tuition not covered by my scholarship. I gotta tell ya, I panicked!! My Dad's business was going under so I knew that my parents couldn't come up with that kinda money and I sure as heck couldn't lay my hands on a cool grand, let alone afford a large pizza even! I'd hafta leave

school, move back home to New York and go to City University there the next year. But first, I made an appointment to see the Dean to ask if he might be able to help me out with a campus job - work study - so I could make the money to pay the tuition. He was able to see me right away, that very afternoon. I was ushered into his office and sat across the desk from him. It was a really big desk. He was a really big guy. I felt really small as I poured out my tale of woe as I begged for a job.

He said something like, "We'll see," or "I'll see what I can do," as he ushered me out of the office and outta his hair. I thought for sure I was a goner. All weekend I spiraled and stewed.

The next Monday after my classes I didn't get thrown out of, I checked my mail box again, and this time there was only one cream-colored envelope in there. It was from the Office of the Dean. I dared to hope that he'd come through and found me a job. Carefully I opened the envelope and read the enclosed letter. "I am pleased to inform you that you are the recipient of a one thousand dollar scholarship for this academic year. Further, this scholarship is renewable for each academic year until you graduate, provided you keep up your grades." I couldn't believe it. I read it again. There was no mistake: that was my name and my scholarship. I teared-up 'cause Tom Dunn hadn't gotten me a job - he saw to it that the bill was paid and I would owe nothing more!

My brothers and sisters in Christ: think of it - over the years how many times we've forgotten God or used the Lord's holy Name as a swear; how many times I claimed I couldn't find a church or couldn't find the time for Mass. How often I've dishonored people who love me and only want the best and good for me; how many times over the years

I've used my tongue to spread some dirt, to cut somebody down, to lie so I could look better and shift the blame for my screw-up to somebody else. How many times ... how many times have I been greedy and insatiable, lustful and unfaithful, mean and moody, angry and spiteful??

All those times ... I've run up a huge debt against my account with God. I could never pay the price. I could never balance the scales.

On Good Friday's Cross, in Holy Saturday's tomb, on Easter Sunday's glory, He did. He paid for me. He found the love to balance the scales. I owe nothing!

All He asks is that I keep up my "grades", my effort, till I graduate from this life to the life He won for me. I could cry - but they'd be tears of joy ... grateful tears of joy.