

**Homily — Third Sunday of Easter 2018**  
**by Rev. Bob Schramm, OSFS**

All three readings speak of repentance, conversion, atonement and expiation. For most of us, I suspect those words have a negative tone to them. They conjour up images of fire and brimstone preachers speaking about hellfire and condemnation.

Some would say that the Church's constant reminder of our sinfulness can be a subtle means of control.  
The Church becomes the exclusive disposer of God's forgiveness.

The English words “repentance” and “conversion” have roots in Greek METANOIA.

The word means a turn in another direction.  
To turn around and face in an entirely new direction.  
But what direction might that be?

Ron Rolheiser offers a suggestion  
“We all have within us:

A great soul (magna anima) and a small soul (pusilla anima).”

**Small soul —**  
petty, afraid, aware of my hurts, constantly  
nursing the sense of having been cheated and short-changed,  
paranoid and defensive, short-sighted, impatient, despairing  
and constantly looking for compensation.

**Great soul —**  
overwhelmed by compassion, everyone is brother or sister to me,  
I want to give of myself without concern of cost.  
I am able to carry the tensions of life without a breakdown in my chastity.  
I would willingly die for others,  
my arms and my heart would want nothing other  
than to embrace the whole world and everyone in it.

We find ourselves living between these two,  
both individually and communally.

Thomas Merton:

"Standing at the corner of 4th and Walnut one day in Louisville  
I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all of those  
people,  
that they were mine, and I, theirs,  
that we could not be alien to one another  
even though we were total strangers.  
It was like waking from a dream of separateness. ...

**Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts,  
the depths of their hearts, where neither sin, nor desire, nor self-knowledge,  
can reach the core of their reality,  
the person that each one is in God's eyes.  
If only we could all see each other that way all the time!  
There would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed.  
I suppose that the big problem would be  
that we would all fall down and worship each other."**

**Easter is about embracing the life of the GREAT SOUL.  
"You are witnesses to these things."**

**Mary McGlone:**

**"In the end, Easter is God's invitation that we all become what we are meant to be  
in and through the encounter with the risen Christ."  
I add: Here in this Eucharist — and in so many small Eucharistic encounters.**

**McGlone goes on:**

**"All the saints will tell us that the process involves terrible confusion  
and frightening realizations that prod us beyond  
our safe boundaries and easy creeds.**

**They will also tell us that the peace we will find is worth any cost."**

**IHM Coordinating Council —**

**How can we live in the spirit of the GREAT SOUL  
in a time when we are experiencing so much loss?**

**Doing Eucharist is so valuable.**

**There is greatness within us —  
each of us, all of us together.**