

## **EASTER SUNDAY 2020**

*Acts 10: 34, 37-43 + Psalm 118 + Colossians 3: 1-4 + John 20: 1-9*

Holy Spirit Catholic Church: Sunday, April 12, 2020

On this Easter morning we find ourselves in the same boat as Mary Magdalene.

Our world has been turned upside down.

We are lost and afraid.

We mourn our “old” life, the life we had before the many losses the coronavirus ushered into our world.

With Mary, we come with darkness surrounding us, to the place of death.

There is no expectation of anything new, only more of the same: sorrow and loss.

With her, we feel empty—joy has fled our lives and peace with it.

At first glance, the Easter Gospel which the Church gives us seems to do nothing to alleviate our sorrow, nothing to take away our emptiness.

John’s Gospel for today is empty of the reassurances of the other Gospels that Christ is Risen.

There is only an empty tomb with a few burial cloths.

There are no angels dressed in dazzling white announcing, “He is Risen.”

There are no encounters with the Risen Lord, at least not yet.

All that greets Peter and the other disciple when they finish their race to the tomb is emptiness. The body of their crucified friend is gone.

The absence of angelic promises, the absence of the Risen Lord, is what many Catholics are feeling right now.

Where is the Lord Jesus in all that is going on in our world?

Emptiness is what many are feeling, an emptiness matching the emptiness of his tomb.

Many Catholics feel the pain of this emptiness in the depths of their spirit,

because they have not received the Eucharist for days seemingly without end.

Part of the challenge of faith at this time is to plunge deeper into the Word of God, where the Lord feeds and nourishes us.

Remember, those first disciples only came to understand the Resurrection as they came to understand the Scriptures that he had to rise from the dead.

What we begin to understand as we ponder the Sacred Scriptures and allow them to illumine our life, is that Resurrection is not a one-time event, but an ongoing reality.

Resurrection is what God does, over and over again.

In the Old Testament, over and over again God raised his fallen people, the People of Israel, to new life. He raised them up from slavery to freedom, from exile to homecoming, from their sinful ways to reconciliation with Him. God did the same with many individuals in the Old Testament, who faced what they thought was the end of their life as they knew it only to be granted new life by God: Abraham and Sarah, Moses and David, Esther and Judith.

The story continues in the New Testament, with Peter dead in his sorrow over his denial of Jesus, life as he knew it seemingly over, being raised to new life by the Risen Lord, so Peter can proclaim this Truth to others.

If we look back on our lives with the eyes of faith, we will see how the Lord has raised us up from this or that loss into a new life. With the eyes of faith, we can see how the Lord has written resurrection into our story. We are able to see and believe.

The Saints show us how to see and believe, how to entrust our lives to the one who is the Lord of life and death.

When Fr. Rother was asked by the religious sisters at his parish a week before his death, what do we tell the people when they come and kill you, he answered:

*“Go into the church and light the Easter candle and sing the Easter Alleluia.”*

Yes, indeed, Christ is Risen, and he raises up to new life all who believe in Him. For Christ is Risen, and we will rise up with him—nothing can kill this saving Truth.

The emptiness of this church feels like the emptiness of the tomb on Easter morn.

Where is the Lord? Where is his Body?

Without the living Body of Christ gathered together to become more fully who they are, to enter more deeply into Communion with each other and with the Risen Lord, this place yawns with emptiness.

But this emptiness is a prelude to the new life the Risen Lord brings from death.

Like the emptiness of the soil receiving the seed which will produce new life,

so the seeds of the resurrection are planted within us this Easter,

the seeds of new life which cannot be killed.

Because with God, life never dies---it only becomes fuller and richer and more meaningful.

For the Risen Lord is calling all of us to faith during these difficult days.  
A faith which is not so much believing that the Lord Jesus exists,  
but instead going to Jesus  
and entrusting our lives to Him, knowing that he cares about us.

This time of trial is forcing us to choose what matters and what passes away;  
a time to separate what is necessary from what is not.  
It is time to get our lives back on track with regard to our relationship  
with the Risen Lord and with others.

There will be a new church building and a new beginning for the people of our parish  
after this time of isolation has ended.  
For to those who walk in the light of the Risen Christ,  
every ending brings with it a new beginning,  
Every death leads to new life.

During this time when so many have experienced the loss of so many things, we are  
invited to reawaken and revive our Easter faith.  
Let us listen once again to the proclamation that saves us:  
***“Christ is risen and living by our side.”***

The Risen Lord by the power of the Spirit of Love which he shares with His Father  
can and will turn to good everything that happens to us, even the bad things.  
With him, we rise up from despair to hope again;  
In him, we rise up from the darkness of doubt to the light of faith;  
Through him, we rise up from our tombs of fear to trust and love again.

He is calling us from death to new life today.  
Because as believers know, with God, life never dies!

*Fr. Joseph A. Jacobi*