

SOLEMNITY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD
MARCH 31/APRIL 1, 2018

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! These words greet us with excitement and promise (tonight) today. After 40 days of fasting, prayer and reflective contemplation, we again mark and proclaim the resurrection of our Lord.

As celebrate this Easter (Night) Day and the weeks of this Easter Season concluding with the celebration of Pentecost, we are faced with the question: how can we witness to the resurrection in our lives? Easter challenges us to live the resurrection in the midst of a broken world. The hope and expectation of new life are cornerstones of the Christian life. Yet we live in a world where the promise and glory of the resurrection is often overpowered by the pain and suffering of so many.

Daily we watch families being torn apart by deportation, children growing up amongst violence even in our schools and war, individual, family and community lives destroyed by the epidemic of opioid addiction, natural disasters and their aftereffects, a culture which St. Pope John Paul II called one of death through promotion of abortion and increasingly focused on vengeance through continued use and calls for reinstatement of the death penalty. Then there are our own personal sufferings and sorrows—physical, emotional, spiritual—all of which seem like the large stone which was placed over the entrance of Jesus' tomb following his burial. Can the promises of Christ be true? Is new life with God really upon us? Questions like these flood our minds as we assemble for this Easter liturgy.

The events of Easter serve as a reminder of the truly countercultural nature of our God. In the light of the events of the resurrection suddenly the prophecies of the scriptures make sense. In that beautiful Easter Gospel story of the encounter between the Risen Jesus and the despairing disciples at Emmaus on Easter Sunday night, through faith Jesus also

“opens our eyes” and we “recognize him” through his word spoken to us in Scripture, especially at Mass, in our own reading and reflection, and most personally and profoundly, as he “breaks the bread” and “pours the cup of his blood” in the bread and wine of the Eucharist with which he himself identified his person, life, sacrificial death and through the Holy Spirit established as the on-going sacrament of his risen presence with us until the end of time. Jesus is Risen and Jesus is here! Like the disciples now we are sent to proclaim him alive through our lives in the midst of our still broken world.

This task of Easter Sunday becomes manifest in our encounters with others. Welcoming the stranger, the immigrant, sharing or serving a meal with the outcast, the homeless, the hungry, visiting the sick, the imprisoned, advocating for justice for the voiceless among us, offering presence to those experiencing sorrow all are encounters Christ invites us to engage in. Just as the holy women who went to the tomb of Jesus at dawn; Mary Magdalene weeping outside the tomb; the disciples on Emmaus road; the eleven apostles huddled in fear in the Upper Room on Easter night all found the faith to witness to the power of the resurrection in their encounter with the Risen Lord, so too we in our despair over the troubles and anxieties of our world and our lives can find the glory of the resurrection through the Scriptures, the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist, and in our encounters with others.

We must remember the joy of Easter (Night) Day. Despite the sadness, confusion and despair we may be feeling, the hope and promise of new life must not escape our view. As we journey into the Easter season, we must continue to open ourselves to the witness of those we encounter so as to live our lives as a witness of all that came to fruition on Easter.

May the joy and promise of the resurrection carry all of us into new life.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!