

Homily

12th April 2020 – Easter Sunday

Vigil Gospel – Mt 28: 1-10

Our World is fragile at the moment and we are living in very uncertain times. I don't think that we have never known a time like it; many of us are isolated, living at home on our own and not able to be with loved ones. It's been particularly painful not being able to be together as a parish family this week for our Holy Week liturgies. It is not easy for us and we have lots of time on our hands to reflect on what is really important in our lives. We worry how long these restrictions are going to remain in place and what it is all going to mean for us and for our country and economy, we just don't know what the future holds.

I think the Gospel takes us into that same kind of uncertainty. For the disciples, the one whom they had loved, trusted, and shared so much; the one whom had led and taught them, the one they needed so much had gone. In their bewilderment they gathered together, fearful of the Jewish authorities and the Romans, and probably asking "What now?" "What does the future hold?"

In the Gospel we hear how the women went to visit the tomb early in the morning, but Jesus was not there. Instead they were confronted by an empty tomb, the stone rolled away, and by a dazzling figure who tells them to go back to the disciples and tell them that Jesus has risen.

Significantly it was a woman who received the message of the incarnation from an angel, and it is women who receive the message of the Resurrection from an angel. The women receive the same message, "Do not be afraid," however to the women at the tomb he adds the words "He has risen....he is going before you to Galilee..."

Full of awe and great joy they run with their news, and then suddenly Jesus is there ahead of them, coming to meet them with a simple everyday word, "**Greetings.**" In the same way that we might stand in front of someone that we love and simply say hello.

Then come words of reassurance from Jesus, "**Do not be afraid. Tell my brothers to go to Galilee and they will see me there.**" In spite of all that had happened he was there with them, looking and sounding the same; calming their fears, giving directions and hope for the future.

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HE IS RISEN. In those three words is the reason for our faith. Over these last 3 great days we have seen the gift of Christ on Thursday as we focussed on service and Eucharist; on Friday the focus was the Cross and the sacrifice and self-giving of Christ; and now today how different the mood and emotion; the sadness and darkness of death has given way to the light and new life as we celebrate in a spirit of great joy and praise; for Christ lives, he is indeed **RISEN**. The earth which was covered in darkness has now been illuminated; Christ the Light has come into the world and into our lives once again.

Christ lives in each one of us and if we let Him he will not only live with us but also transform us. Faith in the Resurrection of Jesus is the basis of our hope in eternal life. Jesus with his victory over sin and death gives us the hope that we need to cope with any situation we find ourselves. Faith in the risen Lord gives us the hope to deal with the uncertainty and fragility that exists in our world today. Jesus is at the heart of everything, and Jesus shines his light brightly upon us today.

We praise God our Father with greater joy than ever, we are filled with that same sense of awe and great joy that the women felt when they were told that Jesus had risen.

Pope Francis said at his general audience on Wednesday, “It is the love of God who at Easter healed our sin with his forgiveness, who made death a passage of life, who changed our fear into trust, our anguish into hope. Easter tells us that God can turn everything to good, that with Him we can truly trust that all will be well.”

So today we celebrate the Resurrection, Jesus the light of the world is risen from the dead and says to us “**do not be afraid,**” don’t worry. We trust in the Lord, as Pope Francis said, in the sure hope that all will be well. Jesus is the one who stands before us today, the one who calms our fears and gives us hope for the future.

Let’s be happy and rejoice this Easter Day and with the Church throughout the world as we celebrate God’s love, let’s join in the great chorus of praise and alleluias to God our Heavenly Father.

Wishing you and your families a very happy Easter.
As always sending you my love and prayers, **Fr Phil.**

Bidding Prayers and Spiritual Communion

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On this Easter Day with great joy we proclaim that Christ is Risen and through him we offer our prayers to the Father.

For the Church throughout the world; may she always be filled with the Risen Life of Christ and proclaim the love that drives out all fear. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

That the Risen Lord may illumine the minds of government leaders; may they make wise decisions for the common good, caring always for the most vulnerable.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For an increase in Christian vocations, especially to marriage, priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life; may those being called respond with open hearts, and may they know our loving support. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For Amanda and Gill and all those who were to be received into the Church this Easter; may they continue to grow in love and knowledge of Christ Jesus as they wait patiently to be received into communion with us. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are sick, especially those affected by the coronavirus; may they, and their families, know the grace and healing of God our loving Father.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For all our medical staff, emergency services and key workers; may they be granted health and strength in their continued generous service of their sisters and brothers.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For ourselves; may we always walk in the light and love of the Risen Lord Jesus that dispels all fear. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For all the faithful departed, especially **Sean Barnes, Alan Lockwood, George Cull, Mary Hickey, Margaret O’Hanlon, Jim Nolan and James Milner: “Eternal rest...”**

We ask Our Lady, Help of Christians, to intercede for us as we pray: **“Hail Mary...”**

Father,

You have already granted us more than we can ask for in the Resurrection of Christ.

As you answer these our prayers, make us ever more faithful to him,

who is Lord forever and ever. Amen.

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Spiritual Communion

Prayer of St Alphonsus

My Jesus,

I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of the altar.

I love you above all things and

I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,

come spiritually into my soul

so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever.

Amen.