

SHARING THE “LIVING WORD” BY OUR PASTOR, FR. EMMANUEL

“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.”

Psalm 118 Verse 24

For most of us, or perhaps for all of us, this is the first time we are celebrating a Holy Week and Easter sitting in our own homes. We all miss Church, we miss Mass and Holy Week Celebrations, we miss one another. We are all very sad when we watch the TV and see how many people are suffering from the present pandemic of coronavirus. We feel with them, we pray with them and pray for them, that the risen Jesus may touch them with his healing hands, may strengthen them and fill them and fill us with his real presence within each one of us. Even in the midst of this pandemic we have to tell everyone that we are a people of hope.

Today is the greatest day of our faith as we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The great hope of Easter is found in an empty tomb that promises new life. The angel said to the women at Jesus’ tomb: *“Why are you looking among the dead for one who is alive? He is not here: he has been raised”* (Luke 24: 5-6). Seek Jesus not in the empty tomb but among the living persons. Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene. She thought he was the gardener, but then she realized it was the risen Christ. Jesus appeared to the disciples going to Emmaus, they thought he was a stranger. But only when they were at the meal with Jesus did they recognized Jesus. It is not enough to know that Christ is risen, but we have to see Him, encounter him and touch him.

- ◆ Where do we find the Risen Jesus? He is alive in every one of us. We may seek him in the gardener, in the stranger, in the poor, in the suffering children dying of hunger, in the persecuted, in the victims of war, in the terminal patients in hospitals and nursing homes, in the handicapped, in the weak, in the disappointed, in the frustrated, especially today among the victims of the present pandemic, their families, their doctors and nurses, Yes, Jesus is present in every one of us. Do we see the Risen Jesus in our brothers and sisters?
- ◆ The resurrection of Christ is the basis of our Christian faith and also the guarantee of our own resurrection. *“The Gospels do not explain the Resurrection; the resurrection explains the Gospels.* Belief in the resurrection is not an appendage to the Christian faith; it is the Christian faith.” All the basic doctrines of Christianity are founded on the truth of the Resurrection. The disciples of Jesus saw the resurrected Jesus and they all became new persons. All their preaching was based on the Resurrection of Christ. We too must become new persons in Christ. The experience of Resurrection should make us anew, transform our lives.
- ◆ Easter gives us the assurance that Good Friday is not the end: Easter reminds us that every Good Friday in our lives will have an Easter Sunday, and that Jesus will let us share the power of his resurrection. The message of Easter is that nothing can destroy us, suffering, pain, sin, rejection, nor death, because Christ has conquered all these, and we too can conquer them if we put our faith in Him.

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- ◆ Easter, the Feast of the Resurrection, gives us the joyful message that we are a ‘resurrection people.’ **It gives us the good news that no tomb can hold us down anymore.** This means that we are not supposed to lie buried in the tomb of our sins, evil habits and dangerous addictions. We have to come out of our tombs with Jesus and transform our lives. The signs of the resurrection testify to the victory of life over death, love over hatred, mercy over vengeance.
- ◆ Source of lasting peace and celestial joy: The living presence of the resurrected Jesus gives us lasting peace and celestial joy amid the boredom, suffering, pain and tensions of our day-to-day life. **“Peace be with you” was his salutation to his disciples on all post-resurrection appearances.** We must experience that peace within us, we must be filled with that peace, and we must radiate that peace to other people. Where ever we are we must become peace-makers. We are called to be transparent Christians, showing others through our lives of love, mercy and compassion and through our spirit of self-sacrificing service that the risen Jesus is living in our hearts.
- ◆ In the Easter celebrations we experience the Risen Christ in our sacred liturgy and in our fellowship. Every Sunday is the day of Resurrection of our Lord. Real peace and joy is only with the Risen Lord. If any of us is not a regular participant in the Sunday celebrations, today is a good day to make a decision not to miss Sunday celebrations.
- ◆ Let me conclude quoting a few words from a homily of Pope Francis given at an Easter Vigil. Pope said, **“Let the risen Jesus enter your life, welcome him as a friend, with trust: he is life!** If up till now you have kept him at a distance, step forward. He will receive you with open arms. If you have been indifferent, take a risk: you won’t be disappointed. If following him seems difficult, don’t be afraid, trust him, be confident that he is close to you, he is with you and he will give you the peace you are looking for and the strength to live as he would have you do.”

Therefore,

Let us pray: Lord give us a share in your Resurrection. Help us to feel your presence as the one who is alive and always at work in our midst. Give us the grace so that we may see the risen Christ in every one of our brothers and sisters. Grant us the grace to experience the joy of your light, liberate us from any form of darkness within us, so that we ourselves may become bearers of your light. Lord, even when our life looks miserable, give us the hope for a life that is good, full and eternal. Amen.

I wish you all a Most Happy and Blessed Easter! May the Risen Lord bless you!

Alleluia Alleluia!