

SAID ED April 8, 2012

Easter Sunday

Welcome to all those who will join us today as we celebrate this great feast. Thank you for being with us and helping us to recognize the presence of the Risen Lord in our midst.

Jesus Christ is risen today, alleluia! This is the day of resurrection, not only the resurrection of the Lord, who has gone before us into Galilee as scripture says, but also the same Lord who goes before us in every step of our lives. The Lord is risen indeed alleluia! Today is the ultimate feast of the celebration of good over evil; the evil that is around us and even the evil that is at times within our hearts, awaiting the redemption of the healing light of Christ.

The Resurrection of Jesus is not just something we believe; it is the reason we believe anything at all! Paul said it clearly: "If Christ has not risen, our faith is in vain and we are still trapped in our sins, the most pitiable of people." (I Cor 15:17) We believe in the Risen Christ because a large and diverse group of credible witnesses testified that they had seen him alive again, days after his death and burial. These men and women spread the news of the Resurrection through the Middle East, then on to Greece and Rome.

The Resurrection of Jesus was a wholly unprecedented event. Jesus had raised Lazarus from his grave and summoned the daughter of Jairus back to life but Lazarus died again and so did the little girl of Galilee. When Jesus rose, however, He drained death of most of its power. It can still claim us but it cannot hold us. We too shall live again and forever as God's children, sharing the joyous, unending life of the Father, Son and Spirit.

Death has always been the most intractable enemy of our race. Easter brings us the good news that Eternal Life has replaced death as the horizon of our lives.

As we gather here today around the Easter candle that symbolizes the presence of the risen Lord in our midst, we are mindful of all those who call upon the name of God. The message of this Easter day is that the tomb is empty. Death and darkness have been robbed of their power, Christ has been raised to life by the glory and the power of God's life giving Spirit.

Our resurrection faith does not turn us away from the world but plunges us into it. Scripture tells us that all creation will share this new and eternal life. The Bible ends, as it began, with the act of creation: "I will make all things new," says the Lord, "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21: 1, 20). The earth shares in this resurrection promise. God commands us to tend it justly and use it wisely for the good of all those who are living now. We must also keep it safe for those countless generations yet unborn that will join us in God's Kingdom.

On behalf of all of our parish staff, I wish you a wonderful and grace filled Easter season.

Jesus Christ is risen today – Alleluia!
