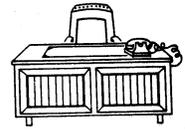


Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord

April 4, 2021



From the Desk of
Fr. Romanus

Dear Parishioners,

The Lord Is Risen, Alleluia!

This has been a busy week with several intense liturgical experiences despite the limitations placed by the pandemic. **Palm Sunday**, the celebration of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem albeit procession with Palms and banners this year due to the pandemic, coupled with the moving proclamation of the passion narrative, set the tone for the rest of Holy Week.

Holy Week has a long history that dates back to the early church. You will find the earliest mention of Holy Week observances in early church documents like *The Apostolic Constitutions*, the *Canonical Epistle of Dionysius of Alexandria*, and the *Pilgrim of Egeria*. Though some things have changed over the years, Holy Week remains a time of intense prayerful devotion and celebration of God's sacrificial love. It is about the victory of good over evil.

The celebration of the Passover meal on **Holy Thursday** marked the institution of the Eucharist which is at the center of the Church's liturgical life. The Church proclaims the Eucharist as the 'source and summit of the Christian life' (LG, no. 11). While instituting the Eucharist, Jesus also instituted the Priesthood. The two go hand-in-hand since we cannot have one without the other. Priesthood in the Church has its origin in Jesus Christ, our Most High Priest. Due to the pandemic some of the remarkable events of Holy Thursday, like the washing of feet and the processional transfer of the Eucharist to the altar of repose were skipped this year. However, the core of the celebration remains.

On **Good Friday**, we celebrated Jesus' redemptive suffering by venerating the cross, an instrument of torture and humiliation transformed by Christ. Though the manner of veneration this year was adapted due to the pandemic, we were still able to reverence the cross. Again, the moving passion narrative reminded us of the intense suffering, public humiliation, and death of Jesus for our salvation. Mass was not celebrated on Good Friday and during the day on Holy Saturday because the Church can only pray effectively through the "living" Christ. Hence, like famished and petrified children, the Church prayerfully awaited the Lord's resurrection with solemn anticipation.

Easter Vigil is a breath of new life as the Church proclaims with uttermost gusto that the Lord has risen and the universal Church echoes glorious songs of victory. Though the service of light was skipped this year due to the pandemic, we were still able to symbolically celebrate Christ as the light of the world. The lighting of individual candles and the dimming of the lights in Church and the lighting of the Easter candle mark the transition from darkness to light. The renunciation of sin and renewal of baptismal promises captured the sense of re-birth. This year's celebration includes the welcoming of our new member, Mariam Diallo, who received the Sacraments of Initiation, and her baby baptized.

Easter Sunday is the oldest and most important feast of the Church's liturgical calendar. Pope Leo I referred to it as the feast of all feasts - *festum festorum* (Latin). Jesus' resurrection is the light at the end of the tunnel and serves as the culmination of the preceding events of Holy Week. The resurrection gives us tremendous joy and hope that when we are done with this life, God will raise us to new life in Christ. The thought of sharing in the resurrection emboldens us when faced with death or the prospect of dying. St. Paul stated that if our hope in Christ was limited to this life, we would have been the most pitiable of all people (1Cor. 15:19). However, to rise with Christ, we must also learn to die with Christ. I pray that God will fill you and your family with the light of the resurrection and banish all fears, anxieties and despair.

Wishing everyone a glorious Easter!

Fr. Romanus