

Easter Sunday

The feast of Easter is the celebration of Jesus' victory over death and mankind's hope for eternal life. This feast gives us the hope of our own Resurrection and at the same time keeps us united with the living Christ who has promised to be with us. The theme of today's Mass includes both proclamation and witness.

St Paul tells us that if Jesus is not risen from the dead, our faith is in vain. In today's Mary Magdalene is asked to go and proclaim the Resurrection to all. To the Disciples of Jesus, His Resurrection was something new and unexpected. It was a total transformation and it gave them a new vision of life. They had been witnesses of his suffering and death and during that time, they had remained hidden out of fear. Their hope in Jesus was shattered. The resurrection brought a complete turn around and they began to proclaim that Jesus, who died on the Cross, was alive.

Later, when they were arrested, persecuted and imprisoned, they rejoiced as they were now even more closely related to the life experience of their Lord through his resurrection. The Acts of the Apostles tell us that they were courageous and were ready to suffer for his sake. The Easter Sunday was a totally reversal of the image of Good Friday. His death which seemed to be a defeat before the world is now shown as a triumph, a victory over death. His dying on the cross in reality was a passage to new life. For Jesus his death was a fulfillment of his Father's will as he accepted it in total obedience that led to his victory.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is center of Christianity. For his disciples it was indeed a mystery. They were not able to comprehend the fact of Resurrection and grasp the deep inner meaning of it, even though Jesus had spoken to them several times, when He was with them. However it built up their faith because of their experience of the presence of Jesus and made them, courageous and ready to face any outcome for their master.

Jesus stood among them, talked to them, ate with them and taught them the doctrine. They were called upon to build the faith of others and we see how marvelous the living faith of the early Church was. The disciples once they knew that Jesus was the Messiah and that he had been resurrected from the dead by the Father, they became totally transformed persons. They were ready to face any suffering and even death. Once Jesus had resurrected by the grace of God the Father and the power of the Holy Spirit, it did not take Him a long time to firmly establish the Mystical Body the Church as the continuation of his mission on earth. Resurrection becomes the unifying factor and building the mystical body of Christ.

Ultimately the Easter is the celebration of the total unending love of the Father for the sake of Humanity. He gave back his son to us with greater love and with the resurrection; Jesus will stay with us forever. The resurrection of Jesus, and later the Pentecost brings change in the disciples. They knew of his presence among them and Jesus worked many miracles through them. People in Jerusalem too once they saw their work, they held them in high esteem. The result of their work was that the community increased in numbers.

Today on Easter Sunday the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus reminds us that we have the same mission as Peter and Mary Magdalene and the other disciples of Jesus. This requires, as the first reading of today tells us, that we need a radical conversion, a radical change on our part.

On this Easter Sunday Jesus calls us to be his messengers of peace. We pray that this peace will remain in our hearts always to make us, his messengers in the world of today. The celebration of Easter is a call for us to change and perhaps change radically – as Jesus' own disciples changed.