

Easter Sunday 2021 (Easter Vigil SJ&QA)

The manager asked Jim, “*Do you believe in after life?*” Jim said, “*Certainly not. There is no proof of it!*” The manager replied, “*Well, there is now. After you left early yesterday to go to your uncle’s funeral he came here looking for you!*”

Jesus is risen, he is alive! Today we celebrate Easter—the greatest festivity of the Church. Jesus the victor, is our Lord and God! The solid, physical and material sign of his resurrection is indeed beyond telling. He conquered death and no one can snatch it away from Him. The early Christians’ exuberant joy a dominant characteristic of the New Testament message is profoundly expressed. Today there is no reason for us to be sad! Christ is risen! The resurrection of Jesus is the cornerstone of our faith and the most extra ordinary happening in our human history. Easter Sunday is a day *of faith, of Joy and rejoicing*. For us Christians there is not a day that compares with Easter Day. *This is truly ‘Dies Domini’ the Day of the Lord*. All our hopes and happiness come from what happened on that first Easter morning. It is a dream come true. By God’s power, the stone was rolled back, the grave was opened, and the tomb was found to be empty. Jesus Christ had risen triumphant from death. So, leave your Good Friday faces behind! *Aren’t we glad Jesus ransomed us? We were lost but have been found. We were blind, but now can see! We were dead, but now are alive!*

Today’s feast provides us with a fresh opportunity of facing ourselves with the issue of our own resurrection. There is a kind of

dying when we allow ourselves to forego our self-interest and personal agenda. It is like coming out of the tomb when we empty ourselves of our sinfulness. We follow the *light of Jesus, who overcomes the darkness, to illumine our way to the life He promised us*. Easter is a feast of radiant light and new life. *Easter is not about bunnies, eggs or candies*. You see, as cute as they are, bunnies can't save you. Only the Lamb of God can. Easter is about what happened to Jesus on the cross simply out of His great love for you and me. It is about hope, renewal and life *in Jesus and with Jesus*. *Share it if you agree!* Let us renew today our baptismal promises to recommit ourselves to bring that light that gives life. *Easter has no spiritual significance for us if Christ has emptied his tomb and we still lie in death.*

If we are the people of God then those who are searching for meaning in life will discover from us that *Christ is the way home, the resting place for restless hearts*. St. Mark significantly shares the story, despite its brevity, that showed us the disposition of Mary Magdalene and the other women who went out to visit the grave and saw the stone removed from the tomb. They ran and told Peter and the other disciples, *"They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him (John 20:2)."* We can imagine the feeling, the sorrow that is in the hearts of the women and his disciples when they came to the tomb. This event leaves them baffled and asking, *what's the meaning of all this?* They now remembered and understood what Jesus said about rising from the dead.

The first proclamation of the resurrection was done with fear, and as someone teasingly commented it must have been awkward, “*because you know the apostles had already divided up Jesus’ stuff.*” It was indeed awkward and done with fear because the truth of Christ’s rising *can be a gauge of their faith.* The feeling of sadness and emptiness of these women was brought on by the Good Friday event. Because of that painful experience of loss and seeming victory of death the empty tomb *surprised them, woke them up, and gave them faith.* That is why at first the women had nothing to say. *Only the people who acknowledge their emptiness can understand the true meaning of an empty tomb.* On seeing the empty tomb they believed. To examine the tomb is to come face to face with death with its various shadows, doubts, uncertainties, suffering... but beyond the empty *tomb is the home where the Father waits in unconditional love.* We know we are still sinners, but because of the Resurrection, we must become grateful, loving, joyful servants of our Lord. There was no way we could buy ourselves back. *We were pawned but not totally lost because we were redeemed. If we are on the side of the one who conquered death then what is there to fear?* In Jesus we have Newness of life! Live Joyful lives, *for, with, and in Jesus Christ.* He has taught us by His word and by His very life that the road to take in this life is the *road of service and love.* As servants, we must continue to listen to our Master and follow His instructions.

Finally recognizing that the Lord has been raised brings with it the responsibility of sharing the message of good news to our brothers

& sisters. We must live in the heart of Jesus by identifying ourselves with everything Jesus stood for. We are not only representatives of Jesus to the world we are His witnesses. We do this like the people of Colossians, whom St. Paul exhorted, “*by living like people who know they have been raised with Christ, people whose perspective on all of life is now from above, not of what is on Earth.*” May the Lord open our hearts and increase the gift of life within us. Amen!