

EASTER SUNDAY

the
Resurrection
of the
Lord

OUR LADY OF PEACE CHURCH
April 4, 2021

FROM THE DESK OF FATHER STAN



My dear friends,

Do we get to Alleluia this Easter?

Do you remember Easter 2020—Easter one year ago? If you don't, I understand because the Covid-19 pandemic stole Easter from us—at least Easter in the normal sense. Because we were on “lock down,” we could not assemble for the usual festivities; we could not gather for communion. We had no Easter egg hunt for the children. And the question that came to my mind was: Is it OK to alleluia during a pandemic?

Well, here we are, one year later. There now is light at the end of the long dark tunnel. Everyone is in the process of being vaccinated! Nonetheless, there are profound shadows in the midst of the light. Over half a million Americans have died due to the pandemic. No part of the world has been left untouched by the invisible microbe that has infected the population. Our medical personnel and resources have been stretched to the breaking point. Some of our neighbors and friends will have an empty place at their Easter dinner this year. We are supposed to continue wearing masks and keeping a social distance. So I am prompted to ask the same question: Is it OK to alleluia during a pandemic?

To respond, I turn to the Gospel of Mark 16:1-7. Because of rules about the Sabbath, the customary anointing of Jesus' body could not take place. So our passage begins, “When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome brought spices that they might go and anoint him. Very early when the sun had risen, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb.” Being very practical minded, the women are discussing something rather mundane. “They were saying to one another, ‘Who will roll back the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?’”

This always reminds me of a delightful story I heard many years ago. A school decided to put on a pageant about the Resurrection of Jesus, and the children were becoming excited. One boy came home to his mother and announced that he got the best part. His mother asked, “Oh, do you get to play Jesus?” Her son responded, “Nope.” “Then, one of the angels?” “No,” the boy replied. “I get to play the stone!” His mother, to say the least, was unimpressed. “Why on earth do you think that's the most important part?” she asked. The boy answered, “Because I get to let Jesus out!”

Returning to our gospel passage, we read, “When they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back; it was very large. On entering the tomb they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were utterly amazed. He said to them, “Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Behold the place where they laid him. But go and tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you.’”

In these few words Mark reminds us why, no matter the circumstances, we must alleluia at Easter. The word “alleluia” comes from the Hebrew, and it simply means “praise the Lord.” Ultimately, we praise the Lord because life—our life, the lives of our loved ones, the lives of those who died from the virus—does not end in a tomb! No matter who rolled the stone back, the women on that first Easter morning did not find a corpse to anoint, as they had expected. No, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead shatters all normal expectations and redefines what it means to exist.

We get to shout alleluia, even in the midst of a pandemic, because we have been given the gift of faith, which tells us that we are destined for eternity. And I like to think that in proclaiming our alleluias we can be as excited as the boy in the school play. Because we know that the stone has been rolled away, we know how the story ends, how life ends—not in eternal nothingness, but everlasting life with God. And, in a real sense, we have the opportunity to “let Jesus out”! There are many people in our world whose lives seem like an entrapment in a tomb. They live in poverty, in homelessness, in the shadows of countless wars, in societies that fail to meet even their basic needs, in families that have been torn apart, in communities that have lost their sense of togetherness, in despair and desperation. When we notice such need and try to help, we let Jesus out of the tomb. When we listen to the lonely or the depressed, we let Jesus out. When we commit ourselves to the community we say we missed, when we make time for family and friends, when we recalibrate our priorities, then we will have learned the lesson of the pandemic, we will know deeply why it is important to alleluia, and we will have a starring role in the story of Easter: we get to let Jesus out!

The parish staff and I wish you and your loved ones
a blessed Easter!



Saturday, April 3—Holy Saturday

7:30A *Lorraine Coyle* 3rd anniversary
by Joyce & Tina Phillips

Sunday, April 4—Easter

6:30A *For all who have died from COVID—19*

8:00A *Carolyn Prunier*
by Paul

10:00A *May Szulborski*
by the Boucher family

Saturday, April 10

4:00P *Freddie & Lorraine Muzyka*
by their family

Sunday, April 11

8:00A *Lauren & Jeff Tela*
by Paul Prunier

10:00A *Joseph Rodovich*
by his family

DAILY MASS

Monday, April 5

8:00A *NO MASS*

Tuesday, April 6

8:00A *NO MASS*

Wednesday, April 7

8:00A *Easter blessings for Connie Galvis*
by Charlotte

Thursday, April 8

8:00A *Carolyn Prunier*
by Paul

Friday, April 9

8:00A *Holy Communion Service*

DEANERY-WIDE DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY CELEBRATION is Sunday, **April 11**, at Blessed Sacrament Church, Greenfield. Confessions 2:00-3:00P. Service at 3:00P. Bishop William Byrne will be the celebrant and homilist.

APPLICATIONS are available for Our Lady of Peace Women's Group Scholarships. We will award (2) \$1,000.00 scholarships to college bound applicants from our parish. Please email Cathy Marcum for applications cmarcum103@comcast.net. Application deadline is **May 7**.



Earning community service hours for graduation.

Our Lady's Window

April 8 *Carolyn Prunier* on her birthday
by Marcia & Marie

We ask the risen Jesus, who turns death into life, to change hatred into love, vengeance into forgiveness, war into peace.

~ Pope Francis ~



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