

An Easter Message

Once, a newspaper ran a cartoon showing a man about to be rescued after he had spent a long time ship-wrecked on a tiny deserted island. The sailor in charge of the rescue team stepped onto the beach and handed the man a stack of newspapers. "Compliments of the Captain," the sailor said. "He would like you to glance at the headlines to see if you'd still like to be rescued!"Sometimes the headlines do scare us. Sometimes we feel that evil is winning, and good is losing; that the future is dark and bleak but then along comes Easter, to remind us that there is no grave deep enough, no seal imposing enough, no stone heavy enough, no evil strong enough to keep Christ in the grave.

Today we wish each other a very happy Easter, for this is a day of great promise and of great light as it was during the first Easter as it is today. It is full of promise because the one who embodied our death, who took on the burden of our sins, has been raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. We proclaim: **Alleluia, He is Risen!** With His rising from the dead, we are now given the chance to rise from our sins. In His rising from the dead, we now see beyond the shroud of death.

We know the darkness of death. We watch the work of death everyday, in the natural disasters, in the killings, in the lies, in the unfaithfulness, in our illness, in the passing away of our loved ones. Even for us Catholics here in America, these past several years, have been tough. In many ways, this is a time of tragedy for the Church. The abuse of our children is a tragedy. The scandal of cover-up is a tragedy. The effects of all these tragedies are far reaching. They have left society at large with a very low opinion of Catholicism and cause many Catholics even from our own families to leave the church. What happened? I think we have forgotten our story – the story of Jesus who has overcome death, evil, sin. And in forgetting it, we have allowed the world to forget it as well. We have allowed the anti-Catholic segments of the media to distort it on a daily basis. Let us stand up to the story of Jesus – who has captured the imagination of millions of people through the centuries. This is what we celebrate this Easter Sunday. Let us recapture this most powerful story that has

influenced every noble aspect of modern civilization. But amid the busyness of our daily lives, it is easy to become distracted and distance ourselves from this story. We have become too comfortably a part of the modern secular culture and this comfort has resulted in a dangerous complacency toward the life-giving word of the Gospel. Too often, we listen to these words but do not allow them to penetrate our hearts and transform our lives. We need to go back to the basics. I know this may sound cliché or trite. But when Catholics dedicate themselves to the basics of our rich and dynamic spirituality extraordinary things begin to happen. The first Christians intrigued the people of their time. So did the saints and so do ordinary people who embrace the Christian life today. In the great majority of cases they don't do anything spectacular. For the most part, they commit themselves to doing simple things spectacularly well and with great love, and that intrigues people. We need to intrigue the people of our time in the same ways.

Whom does your life intrigue? Not with spectacular accomplishments, but simply by the way you live, love and work. If we live and love as the Gospel invites us to, we will intrigue people. Respect and cherish your spouse and children, and people will be intrigued. Work hard and pay attention to the details of your work, and you will intrigue people. Go out of your way to help those in need, people will be intrigued. When we do what is right even if it comes at a great cost to ourselves, people are intrigued. Patience, kindness, humility, gratitude, generosity, courage and forgiveness are all intriguing.

In Jesus the ultimate effects of these are overcome, for in Him God fulfills His promise to bring all creation to a new fulfillment, a new and glorious life. Today our hearts are full of joy as we greet our risen Lord and accept again His invitation to live in Him, to pray in Him, to rise again in Him, in God's good time.

A blessed Easter to you and your loved ones!

Fr. Felino Paulino, Pastor

Fr. Bob Kenny, Parochial Vicar

Fr. Sylvain Cibangu, Parochial Vicar