

Homily of Easter Sunday, Year B

Easter date is not fixed as that of Christmas. The Catholic Church determines the date of Easter since 325 AD. In that year the Council of Nicaea established that Easter would be held on the first Sunday after the first full moon (when night and day are of equal length). This is worked out by ecclesial geographers.

Easter is the greatest Christian celebration. We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from death to life. By his resurrection Jesus conquered death. The celebration continues for fifty days, that is, until Pentecost. Christ's resurrection destroys the sting of death, because by his resurrection, we all have the hope of our own resurrection. St Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:14, "And if Christ has not been raised, then empty too is our preaching, empty too your faith." For this reason, we proclaim, "Dying, you destroyed our death; rising, you restored our life; Lord Jesus come in glory." Jesus says, "For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him on the last day" (John 6:40). For us, resurrection does not mean to rise after three days, it means to rise from sin into new life here on earth, and to rise into eternal life after our death.

Nature celebrates Easter too. The cold winter is gone. It is warm and nice. Life is back to vegetation. Grass, shrubs and trees are back to life. Many churches had baptisms, and new members added to the Church. Many people received the Sacrament of Reconciliation, as a way of spiritual renewal and preparation for Easter. There are people, also, who do not usually go to Mass but attend the Easter Vigil Mass and Easter Sunday Mass. We hope that such people may consider attending Mass more often. Mass is the highest prayer of the Church.

We read in the Gospel, "On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb." The angel of the Lord removed the stone that sealed Jesus' tomb. Jesus was freed from the darkness of the tomb. We are in the darkness of the tomb and covered by the stone if we remain in sin. Easter means moving from the darkness of the tomb to the light of Christ as we celebrated during the Easter Vigil. Easter means moving from cold winter to warm and nice spring. Perhaps, that is why Easter is celebrated in spring. It is an invitation to spring forward with Jesus to new life, a life of glory.

Jesus rose from the dead with a glorious body. Easter, therefore, means changing from inglorious (sin, shame, and loss of honor) to glorious (delightful, honor and newness).

Let us pray with St. Paul, "I want to know him and experience the power of his resurrection" (Philippians 3:10-11). May we experience the power of Jesus' resurrection as he removes our various afflictions which are the various stones that are weighing us down and keeping us in the darkness of the tomb.

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