

EASTER 2015

Second Sunday of Easter - April 12

Easter in us! Make us your people to seed the earth with your peace and compassion. May we plant your love for humanity within all we meet this week.

An Easter Newsletter

Number 2, April 12, 2015

Second Sunday readings:

AA 4, 32-35

1 Jn. 5, 1-6

Jn. 20, 19-31

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul.

Everything they owned was held in common



With great power the apostles gave testimony to the resurrection



There was not a needy person among them

Brought the proceeds of what was sold They laid it at the apostles feet



EASTER IN US!

During the fifty days of Easter the Church wants to create in us expectations towards the resurrection of Jesus. Too often people react: well, it's done! Let's go home and have coffee! They expect nothing more to happen. This is contrary to everything that the gospel is.

Do not be cynical. Rather than being complete, the resurrection is only beginning. We see this so clearly in the words of Jesus in the Gospel reading. "As the Father has

There was a definite moment when the resurrection happened. But it must always happen within the life and space of each believer. The resurrection must happen

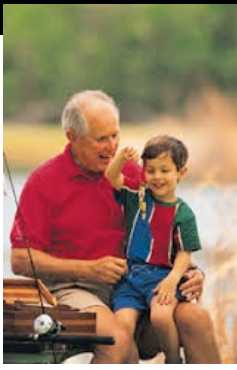


within us.

sent me, so I send you." (Jn. 20,21) This is not a committee meeting trying to reach a consensus. This is divine revelation and it is spoken very clearly in the imperative. Do not hesitate and do not wait. This means now!

Be the hands of the resurrected Christ to our broken world. Never complain about how bad things are getting to be, but rather pick up the tools and begin to make the world a better place. It means moving out of my comfort zone to help the elderly couple manage on their own. This may take a lot of patience but the command of Jesus directs us to be of service to the elderly couple just down the street.

Be the patient listening heart to the young man who seems to have everything going in his direction but he needs someone just to listen and understand his struggles.



LOOK WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU

The early church had it right. They would prepare the candidates who wanted to become Christian for a long period of time. Then they would dramatically bring them to the waters of baptism and plunge them under the waters. From here on, they were joined to the Resurrected Jesus. From here on in, they were responsible to live the Christian life.

This was expected to be a life changing experience. It was not some photo-op time where we could take family pictures and pretend that this is baptism. No, it was the opening to a new way of life. If you were a soldier, involved in the theater (which often involved false worship), you had to change your jobs. A follower of Jesus could not be involved in a sinful way of life!

But the first Christians were very much in touch with their own inadequacies. They knew that the first instructions were only the beginning. The time after Easter was a time to deepen the knowledge and awareness of what had happened to the new candidates. They had a new identity. They had put on Jesus

Christ and now it was time to live and grow in the Christian life.

It would be a very serious mistake to have anyone even think that the waters they had poured on the forehead constitutes them a Christian. This was only their beginning (i.e., entrance into the life of discipleship with Jesus Christ) to travel and journey with the Risen Jesus. The prayer, the preaching and teaching seeks to deepen our identity and participation in the life of the Risen Jesus.

Now, as we the church try to deepen the faith-life of the newly baptized adults, we also are meant to have our own faith life intensified. There is a wise dictum given to all teachers: never teach beyond your practice! In others words, give to the new candidates what you are actually living and practicing. Teach them out of your own lived experience of and with Jesus Christ.

In every parish where they take seriously the teaching and instruction of the new candidates they have experienced tremendous growth among themselves. They soon discover that it is the entire parish that is the new candidate who needs

instruction on what it means to live in the Risen Christ.

CHECK LIST: DO YOU HAVE AN EASTER AWARENESS?

1. My fellow parishioners have a very strong knowledge of the stories of the Resurrected Jesus? Yes/No
2. I sense in my prayer that I share the life of the resurrected Jesus? Yes/No
3. Often during the fifty days of Easter we hear that we are sent by Jesus Christ into the world? Yes/No
4. In our prayers the resurrected Jesus motivates us to care for the world? Yes/No
5. I feel that my fellow parishioners want to deepen their life within the resurrected Jesus? Yes/No



There was a wise word of wisdom given to all fathers: Your adult children will always follow your example, but they will never follow your advice!

Who you are and how you live are the clearest indication of what is important. All the advice and directions you speak to them will often be like so much water which falls off a ducks back! The feathers of a duck never get wet!

In the Christian life Jesus is our model. We follow what has happened in his life. It is his life that speaks so powerfully to us. The most important part of his life was his dedication and service of God and his love for his fellow human being. His life, the stuff that moved him, was what appealed to people. They could see a goodness that they had not seen before. God was revealed to them in new ways.

A constant directive in all his teachings was not to do the right things but to live with the right heart. It means that our heart is sincere: focused on God and moved with compassion for fellow human beings. Jesus fought against a religion that could practice all the 'right' things (follow the letter of the law) but underneath there could be many

crooked deals to exploit the poor and the vulnerable.

When we heard in today's Gospel reading, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you," know that this is directed to all the members of your parish community. The resurrected Jesus sends us into the world to be the living extension of his goodness, his compassion and his justice. What Jesus has done in his earthly life, so now we must do in our time and place.

These fifty days of Easter are a healthy time for the Church to reflect on the mission they have been given by the risen Jesus.

We are not just sent out into the world without direction. This is not throwing a bunch of seeds into the strong headwind and allowing the seeds to fall wherever they may fall. Rather, we are sent to be the love and mercy of God to the people right around us. Too often, human beings can be very blind to the suffering of those who live next door.

When you think of being sent by Jesus, look around your own neighborhood. The risen Jesus will open your eyes in new ways.

STAND WITH THE DISCIPLES

Try to stand with the disciples who are fearful that they may be harmed by the Jewish leadership. The appearance of the resurrected Jesus was always a surprise. They did not expect this to happen.

Jesus stands, gives the customary greeting, but now it takes on the goodness, peace and harmony that belongs to God. Now he gives it to his disciples.

The disciples are exposed to the five wounds of Jesus. The resurrected Jesus always has the five wounds.

Be with the disciples as they hear the divine command. Jesus has been sent by the Father and now he sends the disciples. They are sent into the world (the world can be fearful) to do the work of the risen Christ.

Then, he breathes on them. Breath is always the source of life. Within the breath are the forces of all life. Now, Jesus gives his very life to the disciples.

PRAY THE SCRIPTURES

Bring the Word of God to seep into your bones



He must rise from the dead

RESURRECTION SURPRISES

NO ONE EVER EXPECTED THE RESURRECTION

The resurrection of Jesus is always upsetting. It never allows us to hide in our secure comfort zones.

PRAY OVER THESE IMPORTANT WORDS FROM OUR SUNDAY READINGS.

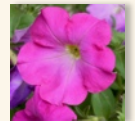
KEY WORDS

John 20,19 “Jesus came and stood among them and said Peace be with you.”



John 20,20

He showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.



John 20,21 Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me so I send you.

1 John 5,1

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.



1 John 5,1

Everyone who loves the parent loves the child.

1 John 5,2

By this, we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.



PRAY THE EASTER SEASON WITH JOY

The great spiritual teachers have instructed us to take the stories of Jesus and place ourselves directly among the disciples. In other words, stand beside the disciples as they unexpectedly experience the resurrected Jesus in their midst. They had not planned that he would return but here he is!

Hear his greeting touch your ears and your heart. “Peace be with you.” This is the goodness and the harmony that God wants for all human beings. Now, all the forces of the divinity are brought to us. God wants the goodness that is

within the Trinity to be lived and shared with us, weak human beings though we are!

The resurrected Jesus gives us great power to live and breath with the heart of Christ. We can now bring to bear on our own situation the goodness of God. It means trying to find the goodness within every human being, especially the people that our society dislikes and consigns to the bottom of the society. Live the resurrection in our daily effort to find the value of each person that society considers are a bother.