

Theme: THE LORD IS TRULY RISEN, ALLELUIA

Today, we celebrate with joy and grateful hearts Easter, "Feast of feasts" as the Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us. It states so beautifully: "Therefore Easter is not simply one feast among others, but the 'feast of feasts', the 'solemnity of solemnities', just as the Eucharist is the 'Sacrament of sacraments'"

(#1169). Yes, "The Lord is truly risen alleluia", gives us hope that one day, our Lord Jesus Christ will also raise our mortal bodies to be with him in heaven. St. Paul confirmed this precious faith in his letter to the Corinthians: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain, you are still in your sin". – 1Cor 15:17. My dear people of God, I don't know any religious denominations whose founder was crucified for his unconditional love for his brothers and sisters and was raised and ascended into heaven except Jesus, the founder of Christianity. Jesus Christ, the founder of our Catholic Church, promised us eternal life because he has won victory over sin and death, and has reconciled us with his heavenly Father.

We hear this very important message of our Christian faith throughout the Bible, especially the readings of this Easter Sunday. In the gospel reading, like the Samaritan woman who was among the first to spread the Word that Jesus is the Messiah (John 4), Mary of Magdala was the first person to announce that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead. All the four Gospels named her as one of the first witnesses of Jesus' resurrection. She spread the good news of Christ's resurrection to Peter and his brothers that their Divine Master has been raised from the dead.

We hear it also in the first reading, St. Peter preached this good news of Jesus' resurrection to the early Church. In Peter's speech, Luke, who authored the Acts of the Apostles, wants us to understand Peter's key message to the early Christians, namely the Lord's rejection, meaning they put him to death. God's vindication is that God raised him from the dead and the apostles' witness to that Christ- event, that is he commissioned them to preach. So Peter and his fellow apostles, preaching of the risen Jesus as the Savior of those who believe in him and the Judge of the living and the dead, will be a major message throughout their homilies in the early Church.

St. Paul, in the second reading, also reminded the Colossians that the risen Lord Jesus Christ is the main source of their salvation. They must die to earthly things so that one day when Christ appears, they will live with him in the presence of God. Like the Colossians, we also have to die to earthly things to be with Jesus Christ in the divine presence of God.

What message do we take home today? Every Easter should remind us of the victory Christ has won over sin and death. Yes, Jesus' resurrection tells us evil would never prevail forever. With his glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven, he gives us hope by God's grace, he will raise our mortal bodies to be with him in heaven. Easter also reminds us of the total unconditional love God has for us that He gave us His only beloved Son Jesus Christ to die and save us from sin. He wants us also to extend this same unconditional love to one another.

Like Mary of Magdala and the apostles, we must also continue to be true witnesses of Jesus' Good News/Gospel to the world. We must not just profess the mystery of faith - Christ has died, Christ is risen and Christ will come again -but live it daily. As we renew our baptismal promises, let us ask Mother Mary and her beloved husband St. Joseph to intercede for us to be faithful to our baptismal promises.

Let us be very grateful and proud of our Catholic faith in Jesus Christ. Yes, He is truly risen, alleluia. Happy and blessed Easter to you all!

