



CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY

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My Dear Parishioners

Once again I want to greet you all. I want to let you know that Fr Stanley, Fr Alphonsus and I are praying for you every day. We miss celebrating the Eucharist in our parish, we miss our community gathering, we miss your physical presence in our church premises. We miss you! But we pray that you are all keeping well and healthy. We pray you are growing in your faith. We pray that Jesus Christ is becoming more and more the centre of your life.

On this 5th Sunday of Lent, this is exactly what we are called to do. We are called to focus on Jesus Christ who breathes into us his living spirit.

The readings at Mass today are very consoling and encouraging. We are living this moment today when it seems the whole world is like a grave, with the Corona virus leading thousands of people into it. It is so easy to be afraid and worried, discouraged and disillusioned, hopeless and helpless.

Yet the first reading from the prophet Ezekiel 37:12-14 is reminding us what God had promised: "And you will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and raise you from your graves, my people. And I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live".

Yes, God wants us to live. Then why are people are dying? Because they are interested only in unspiritual things.

St Paul puts it very beautifully in the second reading of today's Mass. He makes it clear that our interests, however, are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in us. In fact, unless we possessed the Spirit of Christ we would not belong to him. Then he continues: "Though your body may be dead it is because of sin, but if Christ is in you then your spirit is life itself because you have been justified; and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you".

It is from this death of sin that Jesus is raising us up today, as we see in the Gospel passage narrating the raising of Lazarus.

He calls us out of the grave. He calls us by name: "...Come out!" Each one of us can hear our own name being called by Jesus. Jesus wants us to come out of our grave, whatever that may be. What is our grave? What is causing us to be in the grave? We were not made for the grave. Come out! We were made for another place. We were made to be with God. Come out and come to me all you who labour and are burdened. I will give you rest.

But Jesus knows that we find it difficult to live his call fully because we are all bound up with all sorts of stuff. So, Jesus orders: "Unbind him, let him go free".

This is what Jesus is doing to and for all of us. He is calling us to himself – to life- and he is unbinding us from all that is hindering us from going to him and living in him.

Are we enjoying this?

Family Connection

Jesus' promise of eternal life is a central element of our Catholic faith. Even though Easter is still two weeks away, our Gospel today invites us to acknowledge Jesus' power over death, evidenced in the raising of Lazarus, and to anticipate Jesus' conquering of death once and for all in his death and Resurrection. We sometimes use examples from nature to help describe this mystery of our faith. Jesus himself talked about the seed that dies when planted in the ground in order to produce new life (John 12:24). Using that image and others, we find hope and confidence in Jesus, the Resurrection and the life.

Gather your family today and read today's Gospel in its shorter form, John 11:3-7,17,20-27,33b-45. Write Jesus' promise from today's Gospel ("I am the resurrection and the life.") on a large sheet of white paper. As your family talks about what Jesus means by this promise, decorate Jesus' words with symbols that will remind you of his promise of eternal life. Display this reminder of Jesus' promise in a prominent place in your home and keep it there until Easter. Pray that you will always remain confident in Jesus' promise of eternal life. Conclude by praying together the Apostles' Creed.

God bless

Fr Eugene Vaz