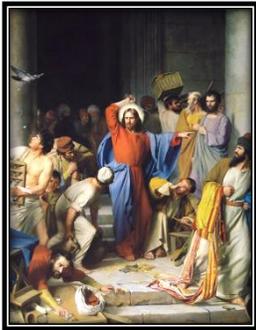
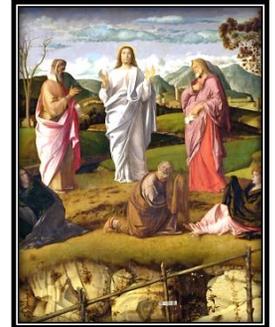




## THE GRATEFUL LIVING



The Holy Season of Lent is over, Easter has arrived and: “what a long, strange trip it’s been”. It started with our promise to “repent and believe in the Gospel” while receiving blessed ashes on our foreheads. It led us with Jesus into the desert to be tempted by Satan. It carried us out of that desert and up a mountain where, with Saints Peter, John, and James we witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus. We perhaps then sat at Jacob’s well with a woman of Samaria or were driven out of the temple with money changers. On the following Sunday we may have witnessed sight being restored to a man born blind or perhaps learned the meaning of John 3:16 with Nicodemus. Only two weeks ago we might have heard Jesus cry out in a loud voice: “Lazarus come out” or tell us that *a grain of wheat must fall to the earth and die in order to produce much fruit*. Most of us, if not all of us, then entered Holy Week on Palm Sunday and read the Passion of the Christ as recorded by Saint Mark, went to the Sacrament of Confession/Penance/Reconciliation on Monday, were given a “model to follow” when Jesus washed the feet of the Apostles at the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday, venerated the Cross on Good Friday after reading the Passion of the Christ as recorded by Saint John, and then went seeking Jesus the Crucified in the tomb on Easter Sunday only to be told that “He has been raised. He is not here. Tell His disciples and Peter to go to Galilee where they will see Him.”



Yes, “what a long strange trip it’s been.” But just as man’s trip didn’t end in the Garden with Creation, it doesn’t end outside the tomb with Resurrection. Man was created in God’s image and likeness to be fertile and to multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it in the flesh. He was resurrected in Christ to subdue the earth in Spirit and in Truth, and to renew the face of the earth. Today, the hope for that renewal is restored: the tomb is empty; Christ’s body is nowhere to be found. “He has been raised! He is not here. Tell His disciples and Peter to go to Galilee where they will see Him.”

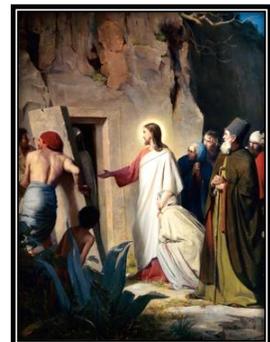


That statement of the young man in the tomb raises the question: “Why was Christ raised from the dead?” The answer to that question can be found in Saint Paul’s Epistle



to the Romans: *Christ was raised from the dead so that we too might live in newness of Life: dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus!* (Romans VI:3-11) In Truth, to live for God is the purpose of every man, woman, and child, no matter what their race, language, colour, creed, or nation of origin and that is why we pray, in the Light of the Resurrection: “Lord send out Your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.”

That renewal of the face of the earth through, with, and in Christ, begins in Baptism, when we are buried in the death of Christ so that we can rise to new Life in His Spirit and like Christ become servants of God and others as we saw in the liturgy of Holy Thursday, with its rite of the washing of feet. Saint Peter, you will remember, did not want Jesus to wash his feet, but he came to realize that: Jesus does not wish to be just an example of how we should wash one another’s feet. Only those who have first allowed Jesus to wash their own feet can then offer this service to others. Only *they* have “a part” with Him and thus can serve others.”

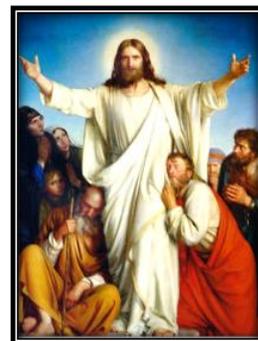


Every moment of the Son of Man's pilgrimage in the Flesh was one of service. "The Son of Man" He said, "came not to be served but to serve". It is that Spirit of service, service that is not indifferent to God and others, that He breathed upon the Apostles and that He breathed upon each one of us at our own Baptism when we promised to serve God and others: in our families, in our schools, in our parishes, and in the whole world thus bringing about that hope for renewal that was restored by an empty tomb!

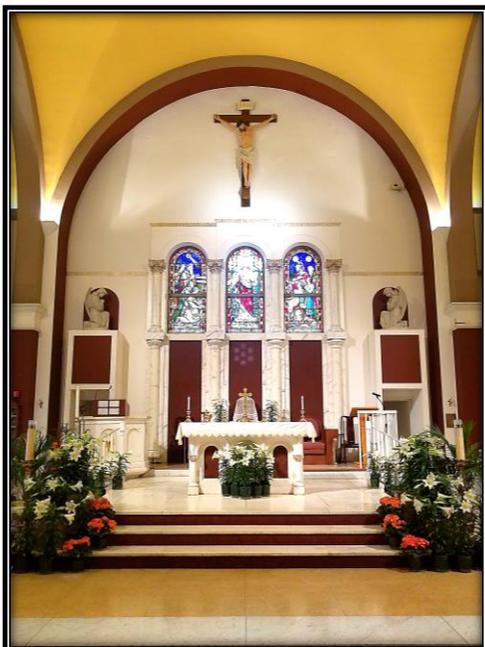


That is why the young man in the tomb tells the two women to "go and tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see Him". Galilee is not simply a geographical location. It is a recalling, an anamnesis, a bringing into the present all they had experienced with Jesus after His baptism. His preaching. His teaching. His healing. Yes it was in Galilee that Jesus was baptized by John and fulfilling the Messianic Prophecy of Isaiah, *was anointed by the Spirit to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind.* (cf. Saint Luke IV:21). It was in Galilee that He called His disciples, and chose the Twelve. It was in Galilee that water was turned into wine, a withered hand was restored, demons were driven out, and the lame leaped. It was in Galilee that His disciples and Peter would be reminded of all that Jesus said and did, and thereby be prepared to "receive the Holy Spirit" that would send them into the world just as Jesus was sent into the world: to renew the face of the earth! (cf. Saint John XX:20-23)

Every human person created according to the Image and Likeness of God is instrumental to the renewal of life on earth. In a particular way, this is true of the Christian who by virtue of his/her Baptism, has been given a share in the Divine Life that is the one thing necessary to bring about life's renewal. That is why it is so important for Christians to *come home* on Sunday – not just **Easter Sunday** when Sacred Hymns and Music "raise it up a notch" to help lift up our hearts to the Lord and an abundance of fragrant Easter lilies adorn the Sanctuary – but **every Sunday** so that we can be fed with the one thing necessary to renew the face of the earth where there is weeping, fear, and doubt. The one thing necessary to renew family life, social life, life at school, and life at work. The one thing necessary is Christ Jesus Risen from the Dead!



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Please join me in giving thanks to God for the members of our Parish family who helped all of us experience "Grateful Living" in such an absolutely beautiful way. People like our Priests, Deacons, Lectors, and Altar Servers whose service in the Sanctuary helped the Word become Flesh and dwell among us. People like Bruce Wimbiscus and our maintenance team who hung the banners, changed the light bulbs, and posted the signs. People like Jane Dengel, Dianne Ryan, Joann Flaherty, and Judy Germaine who arranged the flowers purchased at Duryea Florists and Atlantic Nursery with your "*one small step* Flower-offering". People like Michael Crouse and choir members who offered hymns and songs of thanksgiving in Latin, Spanish, and English. And people like our Ushers who welcomed home people like you and so many others (including Monsignor Strynkowski on Lenten-Fridays, Bishop Andrzej on Holy Tuesday, Bishop Henning on Holy Thursday, and Bishop Murphy on Holy Saturday) to help all of us see why "*coming home* is what it's all about": JESUS!