

April 9, 2023
Cycle A – Easter Sunday

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Psalm: 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Colossians 3:1-4

John 20:1-9

Notes from Bishop Peter

1. Happy Easter to you. May the Risen Lord Jesus live ever more intensely in your hearts and homes.
2. On Good Friday, evil won out. It manifested itself in those who persecuted or denied Jesus. We think of the treachery of Judas, the denial by Peter, the mockery inflicted on Jesus by the soldiers, by King Herod and the crowd. Also, the High Priest Caiaphas who stated that it was better that Jesus die because he feared a riot and a Roman takeover of Jerusalem. Lastly the injustice of Pilate who condemned an innocent man to a cruel death.
3. On Easter Sunday, however, evil lost. The Father raised Jesus from the dead and made him the source of goodness and love and eternal life for all those who believe in him and ratify that belief through Baptism.
 - a. From this we conclude that good will overcome evil, truth will overcome falsehood and light will overcome darkness, either in the short or long run. Evil will continue to have effects on the lives of many human beings but ultimately it will fail.
4. The Good News includes Jesus' love for us and his strong desire to save everyone. In this regard we have the unforgettable image of the Good Shepherd who goes after the stray sheep and Saint Paul's words that God is rich in mercy.
 - a. We also see this in several passages in the Letter to the Hebrews. For example: "Since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." (4:14-16)

5. As the early Christians reflected on the life of Jesus Christ, they realized that he had left a vision of how to help people become more fully alive. He cured sick people including lepers, he forgave sinners, he raised at least three people from the dead, he fed hungry people and inspired and even challenged them through his preaching such as we see in his famous Sermon on the Mount.
 - a. Now, through Baptism, Jesus lives dynamically in us, inspiring us to make his vision come alive according to our gender, talents and state in life.
 - b. I live with a group of outstanding retired priests, all of whom have helped people become better human beings by their love for their people expressed through their teaching, preaching, counseling, and administering the sacraments, especially the Most Holy Eucharist.
 - c. Most of you reading this are laypersons who, even though you don't realize it, are guided by the power of Jesus in your hearts and his vision. For instance, you see this in your sacrifices made out of love for your spouses and children and other family members, your honesty and kindness in the workplace, your creation of businesses and jobs that have led to workers becoming better human beings.
 - d. An example of a laywoman who has used Jesus' vision in an extraordinary way is Eunice Kennedy Shriver, wife of Sargent Shriver and sister of former President, John F. Kennedy. Motivated by the life of Rosemary, her sister with special needs, she created the Special Olympics. She used her personal wealth and the prestige of her family for the good of thousands of athletes with special needs and their families who became more fully alive through sports on the local, regional, national and eventually the international levels.
6. Finally we come to our Eucharist. It is Jesus who remembers how much he suffered and who is with us in ours, desiring that we be with him in heaven some day and gifting us with his vision so that we and people we love and serve can become more fully alive.

Amen.