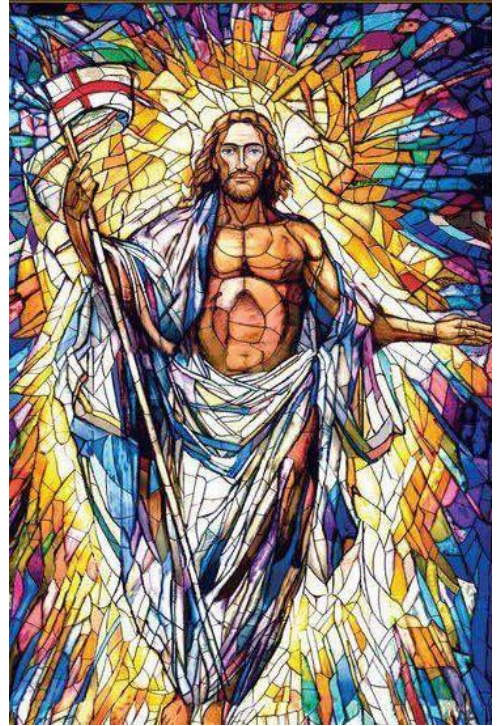


Easter 2024

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

"Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but he has been raised."
Luke 24:5 Greetings of Easter joy! Today marks the summit of our liturgical year. We commence our season of joy and mystery as we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The Easter Gospel stories, which culminate in Pentecost, are moving stories of faith and love, of unity and communion, of the origins of our life as a Eucharistic people. They form the bedrock of our faith, and they are the cornerstone of our life as disciples of the Risen Christ.



The Easter Gospel stories tell us about the Resurrected Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene, the Road to Emmaus, the locked Upper Room, the appearances to the disciples, the Ascension, the vigil of Pentecost, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus speaks to us about faith through the "doubting Thomas", about love when he asks Peter "do you love me?", and about service when he says "feed my sheep". These Gospel readings remind us that we are a Eucharistic people, filled with the Holy Spirit, and sent forth to bring the Good News of God's merciful and unconditional love to all people.

Our celebration of the Easter Season each year reminds us that, even in our fragile human condition, we are able to experience the power of Christ in our lives. Our doubts, our ordinary lives, our insecurities, our problems can be stripped away. Like the disciples "our hearts are burning within us" because we experience Christ in the Breaking of the Bread, in each other, and in ourselves. Henri Nouwen in his book *With Burning Hearts: A Meditation on the Eucharistic Life*, eloquently described the community that grows from the Eucharistic life:

"Communion creates community. Forming a community means building a body of love, shaping a new people of the resurrection..., to enable us to proclaim together to all people, young and old, white and black, poor and rich, that death does not have the last word, that hope is real and God is alive."

Hope is real when we live out the Gospel values that our Resurrected Lord revealed to us: justice, truth, and love. Our commitment to these Gospel values is clear when we put on Christ in every aspect of our lives. The prayer of St. Patrick speaks of Christ “*within me, beside me, above me, below me, in the heart of everyone who thinks of me.*” When we are open to living these Gospel values, when we are open to the grace to do God’s will; then we put on Christ, hope is indeed real, and God is alive in each of us.

Our community life as disciples of the Risen Christ, as Resurrectionists, is a witness that hope is real and God is alive. The clearest expression that God is alive and moving in our community is in our stewardship of this faith tradition. We are finalizing our “Pastoral Parish Plan” which will commit us to enhancing our faith through our rich liturgical celebrations, our deepening reverence for the Eucharist, and our ongoing efforts to grow in our knowledge and understanding of our Catholic traditions. These are all signs of Christ working within our community.

On behalf of the Resurrectionists (*the Congregation of the Resurrection*), we wish that each of you will have a very blessed, happy, and joyous Easter celebration. I look forward to celebrating these great Easter mysteries with you, to walking with you as we all seek to put on Christ. Be assured of my love and prayers for each of you as we all work to bring the hope, joy, and peace of Christ’s Resurrection to all people.

May the Risen Lord bless you and your loved ones, protect you from all evil, and bring you to everlasting life!

Sincerely yours in the Risen Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Father George". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left and then curves back under the name.

Father George Zięba, C.R.
Pastor