

EASTER SUNDAY (Years A, B, C)
4-5-2026 Homily

I. Introduction

A young man named Bill decided to go off alone on a camping trip. His parents were a bit concerned for his safety, but he assured them he'd be all right. He set up camp in the woods and then went off on a hike. While Bill was away, another young man came across the camp, ransacked it, found Bill's wallet, and stole it. Crossing a road during his getaway, however, the thief was hit and killed by a car. The police found Bill's identification on the body, assumed it belonged to the dead man, and notified Bill's parents that their son had been killed in an accident. Bill, unaware of this, returned home two days later and was puzzled to see many cars around the house. They belonged to friends and relatives who had come to console his family, and when Bill opened the front door and walked in, the shock and joy and disbelief experienced by his family and friends was beyond description. Someone they had believed dead was alive.

So it was with the disciples when they began to realize Jesus had actually been raised up to new life, as He Himself had promised. They were truly on an emotional roller-coaster: from the glory and pride of Palm Sunday, to the somber setting and solemn mystery of the Last Supper on Holy Thursday, then to the tension, horror, and shame of Good Friday, to the emptiness and fear of Holy Saturday, and finally to the amazement and shock and sheer joy of Easter Sunday. Jesus' new life was almost too good to be true—yet it was true. We can very easily take Easter for granted; we must instead try to get caught up in the event, as did the disciples. We shouldn't need to have a supposedly-dead family member stand before us alive to make us experience such joy. We were dead in sin, but through Jesus are given the chance for meaning, happiness, peace, freedom—and eternal life. Our response must be one of faith—and having true faith means letting ourselves be overwhelmed by the Good News.

II. Development—**Easter Vigil only:**

The readings we've heard speak of how everything God does is awesome in its goodness and beauty. The Lord God created all that exists, and He saw that it was very good. Even after creation was marred by human sinfulness, He continued expressing His love by making a covenant with Abraham, by rescuing His people from the power of the Egyptians, by providing for them in all their needs, by cleansing them of their sins, and by promising to send them a Savior. Jesus came as fulfillment of that promise; His mission was not, as many people hoped and expected, to establish a mere earthly kingdom, but an everlasting one in Heaven—and He did so in an amazing and unexpected way: by dying on the Cross in obedience to His Father's will, and then being raised up in glory. St. Paul tells us that through baptism, we can share in Christ's glorious victory—a victory so amazing that the women who came to the tomb were quite naturally overwhelmed with fear and wonder.

II. Development—**Easter Sunday only:**

This Good News was the basis of Peter’s preaching in the 1st Reading; the apostle proclaimed that Jesus was raised up by God, and that all who believe in Him experience the forgiveness of their sins. The 2nd Reading calls us to celebrate this feast and to trust without reservation that one day we shall share Christ’s glory; as St. Pau says,

- Colossians:** we must seek what is above, daring to believe that God has something wonderful and amazing in store for us.
- 1st Corinthians:** we must respond to Our Lord’s amazing sacrifice by rooting out our old sinful nature and adopting a new life of sincerity and truth.

In the Gospel Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter, and the other unnamed disciple struggled to make sense of what had happened. Once they saw the Risen Lord, once they came to accept the Resurrection, they were overwhelmed by Good News, and this Gospel message was from then on the source of their motivation, strength, and direction. The same must be true for us.

III. Conclusion

If we truly have faith, there should be some signs or ways we show it. First of all, we’ll attend Mass regularly—not just once or twice a year—and while we’re here, we’ll participate as fully as possible, rather than passively waiting for the Mass to end. We’ll also be involved in and supportive of our parish as much as possible. After all, if we really believe that Jesus’ victory over sin and death is Good News, we should be happy to celebrate it at Mass and in our community. Secondly, we should also be glad to be identified as Christians and as Catholics. We are privileged to be Jesus’ followers. This shouldn’t make us feel superior or complacent, but humble, and eager to share this blessing with others. This we do through our example and through improving ourselves as persons, so that our society will also become a better place. Thirdly, if we truly have faith in the Risen Lord, it will affect our motives for doing good. We’ll try to do the right thing not because of the Church’s rules or because someone may be watching, but because of our love for God and our neighbor. In this way our religion becomes not a matter of what we *have* to do, but of what we *can* do in response to God’s gift.

True followers of Jesus allow themselves to be caught up in His victory. Easter in particular is a time to replace worry with hope, fear with confidence, and sadness with joy. Maybe it’s not easy for us to put on a happy face, but we must certainly put on a happy soul, opening our hearts to God’s love. If the apostles had gone around with long faces even after the Resurrection, there wouldn’t have been any more Christians. It was their joy that attracted others, and the same thing will remain true in our day. Jesus has risen to new life, and this means we too shall live forever. Let us rejoice and be glad.