

## **Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026**

Dear brothers and sisters, Happy Easter. The Church tells that in this season, above all, Alleluia, to be our song. So, Alleluia, Alleluia. The Church throughout the whole world with one united voice raises up, this exultant cup: "*Jesus Christ is risen from the dead.*" All throughout the world today, it's on the lips of believers, "Jesus Christ, our Lord, is completely risen from the dead." And what is good news. Though good, I think, it is an understatement. It is the good news. It is the Gospel. Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. This is the very heart, the very core of our Christian faith. We announce that faith to the whole world, and we live each day by that truth, that Jesus Christ, our Lord, is truly risen from the dead.

I hate to mention Indiana Jones in a solemn Easter Mass, but if you've seen the movie Indiana Jones, and the Last Crusade, you may remember the scene towards the end, where he is getting close to entering the chamber where the grail is. There's a point where he comes to this precipice and he's going along, and suddenly there's this huge chasm before him. And at the other side of the chasm, he sees a wall, and there's a door, a doorway, in the wall. But it appears as if there's no possible way for him to get from where he is to the other side. And that is a very apt description of the rupture that was introduced in the relationship between God and humanity through sin. There is a chasm, an abyss. And if we think that we could just muscle ourselves over that chasm to be united with God, or we just try, try, try harder on our own strength, to get there, we are deluded because it's not going to happen. We cannot bring ourselves from one side of that chasm to the other, to enter into eternal life. But Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, and his Cross, by his Cross, he

has become the bridge that spans that chasm. So that now, it's still not by our own efforts, by our own trying harder, trying harder, not by our own resources, not by that, but now, we have the possibility, dear brothers and sisters, by his grand invitation to cross that bridge, in Christ, into the heart of God. Jesus Christ is risen from the dead.

He has made it possible for us, new life, and I say it all the time I guess, but when we talk about new life, we're not just talking about life in heaven, which will be glorious. I don't need to downplay that. Look can look forward to heaven. Strive to be faithful, try to get there with God's grace. But it's not only for then, it's also for today, today, Christ is our savior today, not just on the day that he died. New life is offered to us today.

And the Church in these holy days, especially with the Easter Vigil but even with the Easter season, the Church focuses on all that God has done. All that God has done to reveal his desire to bring us to himself. From the very first moment of creation, the creation of the world around us and all that is in it, his lavish gifts upon mankind, the crowning glory of his creation. Through all the prophets where he revealed to us, all these very, these view our lives in obedience and humility and grow in trust of him. God has shown us he wants to have even a spousal relationship with his people and even though we are unfaithful so many times, he keeps pouring out his mercy more and more, restoring us, parenting us, drawing us back. He does not turn his back on us. He does not forsake us. He will never abandon us. He just keeps drawing and drawing. God has shown through all of history, how he provides for our needs. Sometimes not in the ways we expect or desire, but he always provides. He gives us so many good gifts – he gives us wisdom, prudence, understanding

all things that can help us to orient our lives to him, and order our lives so we enter into deeper and growing friendship within each day. It's for now, brothers and sisters. This is what God desires for us.

And then in the New Testament readings, we see that what God created us for is actually union. Union with him. Isn't that an astounding fact? That the great God of the universe, so far beyond our grasp, far beyond our understanding, He wants us not just to be his creatures, his servants; He is drawing us into union with him. Union of mind and heart. And it is through the Cross of Jesus Christ, and his resurrection that we share in that life, even now. In the waters of Baptism, we were cleansed of our sins, given new life, filled with new hope, given new joy. And as we walk the path of faith each day of our life, the Lord just keeps on drawing us. Why? Because he wants us. He desires each and every one of us and his desire cannot decrease, cannot be changed. It is his one desire to draw each and every one of us to himself, to capture our hearts, conquer our hearts, claim us.

You know, since the beginning of the Paschal Tridium, the evening of Holy Thursday, we've been hearing about the Lord's desire for us. Holy Thursday we commemorated the Lord's suffering where Jesus said to his disciples, *"I earnestly desire to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."* He earnestly desires to share the banquet of his body and blood with us. He wants to draw all of humanity to him at the sacred table where he gives us, truly, his body and blood, to be our food and drink. On Good Friday, we have heard the words of Jesus from the Cross. *"I thirst. I thirst."* He wasn't speaking about a

thirst for water or just something to drink. His longing in that is for us. He wants our heart. He wants your heart.

And even in today's Gospel, Jesus is looking forward to being reunited with his disciples in Galilee, at a place where he first called them, where their hearts were first set on fire. He gives instruction for them to go there. He's calling them. He wants them to come and see his risen body and for Thomas to put his finger in the nail mark of his hand into his side and to believe. The Lord wants us very, very, very much. We can't even fathom.

So, the question is simply how will we respond to that desire of God? What do we do when we are confronted with that kind of desire for us? Certainly, we don't just sit and enjoy it. That kind of our showing us so clearly to us by the Lord evokes a response of love. And not partial, nothing being held back, nothing restricted. It calls forth from us the gift of our whole heart. That's what he wants more than anything. Your whole heart. And sometimes we might, in that situation say, "I just don't know that I can give my whole heart. There's so much in the way. It just seems like an impossibility. "No! No! There's always a path. There's always a path to union. No one is disqualified. There may be some, some things to work through on that journey but there's always the possibility of pursuing and obtaining that union that God so desires for us. The heart of Jesus, our Savior, pierced on the Cross, opened for us, allows us entry. His heart was opened to us that we might go in and open our hearts to him and receive him.

So, on this Easter Sunday and all through the Eastern season, fifty days, we lift up our voices in exultation, proclaiming that our Lord

Jesus Christ is truly risen from the dead and receive his gift as an expression of God's unfathomable desire for us. And we recognize he's inviting a response. So, let's give him today our "Yes" more than we've ever given our "Yes" before. And maybe, an Alleluia!