

## **Alleluia! He is Risen!**

Praise Jesus! The days of Lent are behind us, and what a time it was. I cannot be more grateful to everyone who made the season a fruitful experience. The parishioners who volunteered with the Five Fridays series, the dedicated teachers and catechists for our children's ministry, the programs and activities for our youth, and especially our musicians for dedicating their time and talent for Holy Week and Easter. This has been an exhausting Lent for many of us, so I hope that you will understand my need to make this article brief. I leave you with a reflection to start our rejoicing, Easter Season.

Let us embrace these words as we begin Easter Season, the 50 days of our leading up to Pentecost and the Ascension of Our Lord. Let us take time to rejoice in the knowledge that God's only begotten Son has risen so we may have everlasting life.

In Christ,  
Fr. Jones

Saying those words, **Alleluia! He is Risen!**, is like drinking a tall glass of cold water after being out in the desert all day. Lent is over and it is now time to celebrate the great joy of Easter!

At the Easter Vigil, the Exsultet is sung as Mass begins in darkness, illumined only by candles throughout the church. The Exsultet is a beautiful hymn of rejoicing in Christ's triumph over sin and death. One part states:

O truly necessary sin of Adam, destroyed completely by the Death of Christ! O happy fault that earned for us so great, so glorious a Redeemer!

This line stands out because it calls the sin of Adam "necessary" and refers to it as "O happy fault." At first, this may seem strange. Why is it that we refer to the sin of Adam, Original Sin, as "necessary" and "happy." The answer is Easter. It's because God, in His perfect wisdom and love, took sin and the consequence of sin (death) and used them as the means of the salvation of the world. That's what Easter is all about!

This may be hard to comprehend so it's worth thinking about more deeply. Without Adam's sin, there would be no Jesus. God would not have had to become one of us. So even though the original sin of Adam, as well as all future sin, is evil and wrong, God in His perfect power and love chose to use it as the very means of the salvation of the world. How? By allowing the sins of the world to persecute Him and crucify Him, and then, by turning that suffering and death into the very means of salvation. Jesus destroyed sin by destroying the consequences of sin which is death. Death loses in the Resurrection! Jesus' Resurrection takes away the effects of all sin for those who cling to Him.

Easter is a time when we must do just that. We must "cling" to our resurrected Lord! We must cling to Jesus who is alive and well. We must cling to His Resurrection and strive to share in it. How do we cling to our Resurrected Lord? There are many ways. Here is one.

Take joy in everything. Start with whatever it is that burdens you the most. Whatever it is that makes you angry, sad or depressed. Whatever that is, it can potentially become one of your greatest sources of grace and joy. Seriously, it can. If the brutal Crucifixion of Jesus, the Son of God, can turn out to be the greatest event in all of human history, then your personal suffering, your burden, or even your sin can very much become a source of great joy as long as you let God transform it into part of His Resurrection!

This is the meaning of Easter! Easter means that nothing can keep us from the joy that God wants to give us. Nothing can steal that joy away. Sure, at times we will struggle just as Jesus did in the Agony of the Garden and the Via Dolorosa (the Way of the Cross), but those sufferings will not win. The Resurrection won with Christ and it will win with us when we cling to Him. Jesus persevered and, in the end, rose victorious. This is Easter!

Know that God wants you to experience the joy of Easter in your life. Let Him fill you with hope and with the joy that only the Resurrection can bring. God wants Easter to begin now in our lives! Happy Easter!

**Lord, help me to cling to You in Your Resurrection. Help me to let you transform every cross and burden in my life into joy. Lord, may Your joy fill my life and be my strength in all things. Jesus, I trust in You.**

