

FR. PETER'S EASTER HOMILY

I have a custom which I borrowed from the Eastern Rite of the Church.
I will say "Christ is Risen!" and you respond, "Indeed He is Risen!"
We will do it three times, and hopefully each time you will respond louder.

Christ is risen! Indeed He is Risen!
Indeed he is risen!

I want to welcome all of you who have gathered for this central feast of the Church's year; my warmest wishes for a blessed Easter!

After our spiritual journey through the 40 days of Lent, and after the solemn commemoration of our Lord's Passion and Death, we have arrived at the celebration of Christ's glorious Resurrection.

We celebrate in a particular way with all those throughout the Diocese and the world who were [will be] baptized, Confirmed by the Holy Spirit, and welcomed to the Eucharistic Table for the first time last night [this evening] during the Easter Vigil.

Here at St. Joseph's, we celebrate in a very special way with Anthony Kis who was fully initiated into the sacramental of the Church.
He is a sign to us of the fruitfulness of the Church.

In this liturgical year B we have been reading from the Gospel according to Mark.

Mark's Gospel was the earliest to be written and his account is rich with details.

After witnessing their Lord's crucifixion and burial, the faithful women led by Mary Magdalene come to the tomb early in the morning to anoint the body of Jesus.
On their way they ask a very practical question: "Who will roll back the stone for us?"
We can very well ask the same question in the various circumstances of our own lives:
Who will roll back the stone for us?
When we experience fear and doubt ...
Who will roll the stone back for us?
When we experience unexpected sickness ...
Who will roll the stone back for us?
When we experience sadness and loss ...
Who will roll the stone back for us?
When we fall into sin, when we fail in discipleship, and when we are less than the person God created us to be ...
Who will roll the stone back for us?
As people of faith we know the answer to this question:

It is Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, who rolls away the stone and frees us from the darkness.

Like the women at the tomb let us be amazed at the power of God's love which conquers death.

Let us open our hearts anew to the Good News which brings a message of hope and healing to our wounded world.

Because we have died with Christ in Baptism we have risen to new life with him. We have been gifted with faith, strengthened to hold fast to it, and empowered to share it with others.

The empty tomb declares that, ultimately, love cannot be defeated. Jesus is alive and the fear of death no longer has a permanent hold on us. We are now free to love courageously and without limit just as Christ has loved us. And as Jesus promised that his first disciples would see him risen from the dead so we too "see" him present in our lives. Others too will see Jesus through the generous witness of our lives. He will be seen in our concrete acts of charity and mercy - especially toward the poor and the marginalized.

He will be seen in our kindness, patience, humility, and our willingness to forgive.

The risen Jesus will be seen and made manifest in our persistent hope for that new day when all of our losses and sorrows will be replaced by eternal joy.

Dear friends in Christ, as we prepare to renew our baptismal promises and our commitment to the risen life of the Lord Jesus ...
... let us allow him to roll away any stone that remains in our path to full discipleship.

Let go of anything holding you back and surrender to the One who loves you and wants to shower upon you the abundance of the Holy Spirit.
Only then will we be able to proclaim far and wide with full voice and a full heart:
Christ is Risen!
Indeed He is Risen!
