

Holy Saturday Easter 2024

My dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, after having gone through a long and sad Holy Week, enduring with the Lord His terrible suffering and death, today we are here, participating in this Holy Mass with joy, knowing that Christ has risen. And we frequently repeat, "Alleluia!" This word, which means "Praise God,"

We celebrate Easter with pride and jubilation for three reasons:

1) The resurrection of Christ is the basis of our Christian Faith. The Resurrection is the greatest of the miracles -- it proves that Jesus is God. That is why St. Paul writes: *"If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain; and your faith is in vain... And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is a delusion and you are still lost in your sins... But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep"* (I Cor 15:14, 17, 20). If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, then the Church is a fraud, and faith is a sham. But if He really did rise from the dead, His message is true! Without the Resurrection, Jesus would have remained forever a good person who had met a tragic end. People would remember some of his teachings, and a handful of people might try to live according to them. All the basic doctrines of Christianity are founded on the truth of the Resurrection. *"Jesus is Lord; He is risen"* (Rom 10:9) was the central theme of the *kerygma* (or "preaching"), of the Apostles

2) Easter is the guarantee of our own resurrection. Jesus assured Martha at the tomb of Lazarus: *"I am the Resurrection and the life; whoever believes in Me will live even though he dies"* (Jn 11: 25-26). Christ will raise us up on the

last day, but it is also true, in a sense, that we have already risen with Christ. By virtue of the Holy Spirit, our Christian life is already a participation in the death and Resurrection of Christ (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1002, #1003).

3) Easter is a feast which gives us hope and encouragement in this world of pain, sorrows and tears. It reminds us that life is worth living. It is our belief in the Real Presence of the Risen Jesus in our souls, in His Church, in the Blessed Sacrament and in Heaven that gives meaning to our personal, as well as to our common, prayers. Our trust in the all-pervading presence of the Risen Lord gives us strength to fight against temptations and freedom from unnecessary worries and fears. The prayer of St. Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland, reads: "Christ before me, Christ beside me, Christ within me, never to part."

Today nine people are receiving baptism and fourteen people are confirming in the catholic faith. They prepared for one year and attended for classes so faithfully. They are very happily waiting for the day. I am proud of them. They have love for God, giving time to learn about God and church. They had lot of patience in listening classes and participating in different church activities. It is the sign of their catholic faith. I believe the lord has risen and Holy Spirit is guiding in their life Journey of faith. I am proud of you all.