

St. Peter's, Holy Guardian Angels, and St. John the Baptist Parishes

(902) 535-2053

Rev. John Yake, I. V. Dei

Bulletin email: bulletinsjbsp@gmail.com

March 31, 2024, Easter Sunday

Resurrection of the Lord

"Easter is the Solemnity of Solemnities, the center and climax of the Church year. All the mysteries that we have commemorated from Advent until now have pointed toward Easter; all that we shall yet celebrate in the weeks that follow has its foundation in the mystery of Easter, and receives its meaning and importance from this mystery."—**Benedict Baur, OSB, *The Light of the World***

In the very center of the Mass, the great prayer of thanksgiving, from the first words of the Preface, expresses the unrivaled motive for this joy: if it is right to praise You, Lord, at all times, how much more so should we not glorify You on this day when Christ our Passover was sacrificed, for He is the true Lamb who took away the sins of the world, who by His Death destroyed our death and by His Resurrection restored our life. Easter means, then, Redemption obtained — sin destroyed, death overcome, divine life brought back to us, the resurrection of our body which is promised immortality. With such a certitude, we should banish all trace of sadness.

Haec dies quam fecit Dominus: "This is the day which the Lord has made." Throughout the octave we shall sing of the unequalled joy which throws open eternity to us. Every Sunday will furnish a reminder of it, and from Sunday to Sunday, from year to year, the Easters of this earth will lead us to that blessed day on which Christ has promised that He will come again with glory to take us with Him into the kingdom of His Father.

Mass Readings

The **First Reading** is from *Acts 10:34; 37-43*. These verses are part of the story of the conversion of Cornelius, a Roman army officer. Stationed in Caesarea, Cornelius believed the God of the Jews was the true God, but though a good-living

man, he had not become a Jew. Advised by a divine messenger, he sent to Joppa for St. Peter, whose antipathy to pagans had been corrected by a vision seen that same day. Peter came to Caesarea and, contrary to his life-long custom, entered the pagan home of Cornelius, who explained to him why he had been asked to come.

This passage from Acts has been selected for Easter Sunday not only because the resurrection is mentioned in it, but especially St. Peter in his first discourse to a Gentile makes the resurrection the basic doctrine and the crowning proof of the truth of the Christian faith. As St. Paul says: “If Christ has not risen vain is our preaching, vain too is your faith” (1 Cor 15:14). And like Paul, St. Peter stresses the truth of the resurrection by citing witnesses, including himself, who had not only seen the risen Jesus but had spoken to him and actually eaten with him.

There is little doubt but that the Apostles and disciples had thought that the sad events of Good Friday had put an end forever to the mission of love and mercy of their beloved Master. In spite of his previous preferences to his resurrection, they had completely forgotten it and were convinced that the tomb near Calvary was the end of all their hopes. They had locked themselves into the room of the Last Supper for fear of the Jews—two of them had set off for home on the Sunday morning, down-hearted at the Master’s failure; the others were waiting for an opportunity to slip out of the city quietly. But the resurrection changed all this. The unexpected, the un hoped-for happened. Even the most skeptical of them all, doubting Thomas, was eventually convinced of its reality. Had they been hoping for it, or even thinking of it, there might be some reason to suspect it was only an hallucination, the result of their “wishful thinking,” but the very opposite was the case. They were hard to convince even when it happened.

All this was intended by God—the basis of our Christian faith was proved beyond doubt. Christ, who had died on the cross on Good Friday, was raised from the dead by his Father on Easter morning. He returned to heaven in the full glory of the divinity which he had hidden while on earth, together with his human body, now also glorified. There (in heaven), as God and Man, he pleads for us at the right hand of the Father until the day when he who redeemed all men will come to judge them all.

The Alleluia is repeated often during the Easter ceremonies. It is a Hebrew word which means “praise ye the Lord.” It is our attempt to give verbal expression to our joy and gratitude for all that God has done for us. We are no longer mere humans living on this planet for a few short years. We are citizens of heaven, made children of God the Father by Christ our Brother. And he has gone before us to his

and our kingdom to prepare a place for us. He conquered death. Our earthly death has, therefore, now no real fears for us: it is not the end but the beginning of our true lives. It is only after our earthly death that we truly begin to live.

There is only death now which we can fear—the spiritual death of serious sin which can keep us from our true heavenly life. But while this is a possibility for all of us, it is only a possibility. The sincere Christian who realizes what God has done for him and what is in store for him, will never be so ungrateful to God or so forgetful of his own best interests as to let some temporal and passing pleasure, pride, or profit, come between him and the eternal home which God's love has prepared and planned for him.

The **Second Reading** is from the letter of St. Paul to the *Colossians* 3:1-4. The method of administering Baptism in the apostolic days was by immersion. Those who heard the story of the Gospel and were ready to believe in the one true God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit who had cooperated in man's redemption and elevation to divine sonship, were immersed in water to be cleansed from their sins and their previous worldliness. Immersion in water symbolized being buried in the tomb with Christ. By immersion, therefore, the new Christian died with Christ to all earthly attachments and desires. He was raised again from the water (the tomb) to be with the Risen Christ.

We are always looking forward to a happier day which is to come some time. All this is very natural and very human, because our present life is not our permanent life; our present home, this earth, is not the real home destined for us by our loving Creator.

We were created for unending happiness in heaven, and it is only when we get there that our desire and our quest for some great happiness will end. From then on, we will always enjoy and possess that all-satisfying happiness.

Today, Easter Sunday, St. Paul reminds us that we have this happiness within our grasp. We are moving steadily and more quickly than we realize toward it. The Holy Trinity, God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, have already done, and are daily continuing to do for us, all within their power. All that is needed is that we do the little that is asked of us.

St. Paul tells us we must “mind the things that are above not the things that are on earth.” We must never let the “things of earth,” the pleasures, the power, the possessions, which we can or could have in this life, block or impede us on our upward journey. Does this mean we must all return to the deserts of Egypt, as some

early Christians did? By no means. we are not forbidden to have the lawful pleasures of life. We are not forbidden possessions or power if they are used justly. All we are forbidden is the unlawful use of the things of the world.

The **Gospel** for Easter is from *John 20:1-9*. The accounts of the resurrection of Christ differ in many details in the different writings of the New Testament, but the fact of the resurrection stressed in all of them, was the basis of the new Christian Faith. Had it not happened, Christianity would have been stillborn. It would have disappeared from Jerusalem and the world on that first Easter Sunday. Peter and his companions would have returned to their fishing-nets and boats on Lake Genesareth, and Christ the good and the kind man who had helped so many, would have been forgotten in half a generation.

But Christ was no mere man of kindly acts and words of wisdom. He was the Messiah promised for centuries. He was the suffering servant foretold by Isaiah, whose perfect obedience to his Father had led him to the Cross and the grave. But above all, he was the Son of God who had emptied himself (St. Paul) of his divine glory in order to be the perfect human servant of the Father, and who was now raised by the Father, with his divine glory restored, and his glorified resurrected body sharing in that glory. This was the kind of divine plan of God for mankind: through Christ, and because of Christ's (the new Adam's) perfect obedience, all mankind would be made worthy of divine sonship, and worthy of one day rising like Christ from the grave in glorified bodies.

Is all this too good to be true? It is, if we make God in our image and likeness, as so many opponents of Christianity do. He is God and his love is infinite and incomprehensible to us. What God can see in me and my fellowmen will always be a mystery to me, but then I have not the mind of God. All I know and all I need to know is that I have sufficient proofs that God loves all men. The Incarnation, death and resurrection of his Divine Son for man's sake is the greatest proof of love for us that even the omnipotent God could give. He has given it. As a necessary consequence from this act of divine love, we are guaranteed our resurrection from the dead to a life of unending happiness and glory if we do not, in extreme folly, reject God's offer.

Today, let us thank God once more for Easter and for all it means for us.
—Excerpted from *The Sunday Readings, Cycle A*, by Fr. Kevin O'Sullivan, O.F.M.

No weekday Masses Monday, April 1-Friday, April 5

Saturday, April 6, 2024

SJB 4:00 PM

+ *Kenny Cosman, Jr.*

SP 5:30 PM

+ *Sutherland Family*

Sunday, April 7, 2024

SH 9:30 AM

HGA 11:30 AM

+ *Catherine, Charlie & Walter A. Bona*

Please keep in your prayers, **Sister Margaret Landry**, formerly Sister M. Amelia, 101, a Sister of Saint Martha, Antigonish, who died at Mary's Court, Parkland, Antigonish on Thursday March 21, 2024 in the 74th year of her Religious Life.

Born in Lower South River, Antigonish County, Sister Margaret was the daughter of the late George and Amelia (Boudreau) Landry. Sister Margaret is the last surviving member of her immediate family. Besides her parents she was predeceased by sisters Nathalie Levy and Elizabeth Connolly, and brothers James, Charles, Thomas, and Nicholas. She is survived by many devoted nieces and nephews and their families.

Sister Margaret entered the Sisters of St. Martha on February 15, 1950. She pronounced her first vows on February 15, 1952, and her perpetual vows on August 15, 1955. Homemaking was Sr. Margaret's consistent ministry throughout her religious life. She excelled not only in the duties of this ministry but in the spirit of it as well. She truly was a homemaker. She served in several places where our sisters were present. In Nova Scotia, St. Andrews; Bethany; St. Francis Xavier University; Antigonish; Sydney; as well as Toronto, Arnprior, and Ottawa, in Ontario; and Kamloops, BC.

A kind, funny and compassionate presence, Sister Margaret was a prayerful and wise woman. She held all aspects of farming close to her heart, with a game of cards being a close second. When she made the move to Mary's Court, she was

delighted to discover that her room overlooked the barn on Bethany Property, and she could sit and watch the activity of the Martha New Growers. She certainly understood the interconnectedness of all creation.

Sister Margaret witnessed daily to a life of humbleness, simplicity, and humour. She was grateful for all the big moments of life and the seemingly mundane. Her loss of hearing did not stop her from engaging with others and deepened her life of contemplative prayer.

She will be resting at Martha Place, Parkland Antigonish, Tuesday March 26, 2024, at 9:00 a.m., a Vigil Celebration will be held at 11:00 am in St. Martha Chapel, Parkland Antigonish. A Liturgy of Christian Burial will take place on the same day, March 26 at 1:45 p.m. in St. Martha Chapel. The Mass of Christian Burial will be live streamed on the Funeral Home Website.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Landry family and the Sisters of St. Martha of Antigonish

May Sister Margaret's soul and all the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.