

Easter Sunday 2024

Biblical Reflections in the Readings: Isaiah 55:1-11 Romans 6:3-11 Mark 16:1-7

From Fr Kevin Walsh, Sydney Australia

PREPARE

We invite you to find a comfortable position as you read this reflection. Light a candle if you wish and become aware of your breathing. When you are ready, slowly read the reflection, pause when you are drawn to stop and reflect on what you have read. Write down your thought and feeling to ponder on these later if you wish.

Easter Sunday is with us again! Is it with a sigh of relief that we have a 'break' at this time of the year? Is it just another Sunday? Is it just another time of the year for the commercial world to make more money using a solemn Christian Feast to catch more Dollars?

Resurrection implies new life! This is the gift we receive every morning when we wake up! Today is a totally different day from yesterday. Part of something being a gift is that someone gives, someone else receives, and there is no price tag attached. If there is a snag, it is that God gives me nothing for myself! If God gives me the gift of life today, it is because I can be a life-giving person to someone else. The Easter Liturgy celebrates the Father re-breathing 'life' into His Son, and that 'new life' is to be shared among all people, and by all people.

Easter is about hope; it is unthinkable that a Christian should even entertain the ideas of hopelessness, even when we live in a world, which thrives, and makes money on shocking news! Jesus triumphed over the darkness of sin, and death, and in the words of St. Paul, **'having given us Christ Jesus, will the Father not surely give us everything else?'** There is a tremendous need for people of hope in today's world, and in today's Church, because the doomsday prophets have never had it so good! One notable Shepherd in the Church said that we Christians these days are under siege! What? The whole Christian way of life has been under siege since the crucifixion of Jesus! However, Easter Sunday is the answer to those who claim that we are under siege! Jesus said, **'I am sending you out as lambs among wolves...'** So, what's new! Sensationalism of the moment can be seen as a tactic to win favour and solace from others. St. Peter wrote these words to the early Christian community: *'Always have an explanation to give to those who ask you the reason for the hope that you have.'* Peter had experienced, witnessed, and lived through many a failure, so his point about hope is deeply relevant. I am sure that he is not alone in this regard... surely, we can identify with him!

Easter time is a reminder of our Baptismal responsibilities. We have a very real sign of that within our Parish communities with the welcoming and admission of our Elect, into full communion with the Church. We are therefore reminded strongly, that we must be a community of hospitality, a community of mission, a community of Thanksgiving. Underpinning all that, we are as St Paul's says, **'planted on love and built on love, so that together with all the Saints we will have the strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; until knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, we are filled with the utter fullness of God.'** Ephesians 3:18.

Easter time in not a 'one off time' to celebrate Christ Our Light! Easter time offers an enormous challenge to everyone. Do we personally believe in the community, which we call the Church, to that point of wanting to really know, and care about each other? Or are we sometimes tempted to see the Sacramental Life of the Church as Spiritual Service Station, where we fill up every now and then, like we do our cars with Petrol? The Sacramental Community nourishes us, and we are called to nourish it by our active participation in every way possible. The Easter Liturgy is most definitely not a time for Church/Cathedral Choirs to be 'show casing' their prowess in highbrow musical renditions, or extravagant arias! The Choir is a ministry or leadership and companionship with the community, not for the community. Cold rubrics which are meticulously exact should be out the door and encompassing Liturgy must be the order of the gathering in prayer!

We pray that through this Easter Season,
we will be stronger in our **hope**,
lively in **our love** for one another,
and **sensitive to see**, with the eyes of faith,
the saving hand of God in our lives and within our community.

Finally, **Easter reminds us** to be a Church oozing with simplicity, truth, authenticity and daring in every way in its Mission. The Father re breathed the breath of life into His Son. We are called to continually re vitalise life into every opportunity which avails itself for Christ-like action. Our Pope is leading the way in this regard.....his recent Pilgrimages, though unwell, he said that it is '*the pilgrimage of a Penitent*'.....not as an Emperor!

Easter calls us to be entirely authentic, real and the embodiment of Peace as we receive humbly and live justly the Lord's first Gift to us..... '*Peace, be with you!*'

The Easter gift of Peace given to us by the Risen Lord, automatically implies that we believe in each other. The world seems to thrive on suspicion, cyber hacking, blackmail and under table deals between some nations for their own ends. There are countless examples of this in our world today, which are delivered into our Lounge Rooms while we munch on Pizza Supreme, thin, and crusty; Uber eats of good old fashioned, Bangers and Mash! The critical situation in Myanmar at present, is a prime example of Military Juntas headed by Thugs, and backed by a couple of influential nations, in smashing the humanitarian right to live, to grow, be free and happy! The senseless invasion of Ukraine by Russia, coupled with the disastrous war in Gaza is a clarion call to all Nations to form a coalition where the human rights of these suffering people will have the chance to *live in freedom, respecting differences and rejoicing in the mystery 'Peace.'* No matter what shadows are cast by Influential Nations who back the Military, which tends to cripple Nations of the willing; belief in the right to life must prevail at all costs, even to risking trade relationships, and UN status. Easter commands us '**to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with God and each other.**' Micah 6:8

**Christ yesterday and today
The beginning and the end, Alpha, and Omega;
All time belongs to him, and all the ages.**

**To him be glory and power, Through every age for ever. Amen.
By his holy and glorious wounds
May Christ our Lord guard us and keep us. Amen.**

**May the light of Christ, rising in glory,
Dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.**

'Peace, be with you!'