

MESSAGE FROM THE LAP TOP

ALLELUIA, HE HAS RISEN AS HE SAID, ALLELUIA!

A blessed **Easter** to all:

The past days of the Paschal Triduum and Octave of Easter will certainly be remembered by me for the rest of my life. The ground swell of liturgical preparations for the Triduum and the wonderful sense and smells of our church that come with the Easter celebration are distinctly missing this year; practicing with altar servers, directing lectors, arranging for special ministers of Holy Communion, pulling faithful parties together for church preparation and decoration was sparse this year. But, weird as it was, I can honestly say that the distinct and deep nature of the Triduum and Easter Sunday flooded over me as each day unfolded. Celebrating the liturgies to a near empty church (I did invite a couple of HNOJ family members to be present to add response to the parts of the liturgies) I could sense the presence of you, our HNOJ family, joining with me in the prayers and celebrations. I can be sure that my brother priests probably would say that they felt the same way. As reminded by viewing a few programs on EWTN, even though we priests were in empty or limited attendance within our churches, we were not ALONE! When we gather at the Holy Altar of the Lord, heaven and earth are united in a unique conjoining of the Church triumphant with the Church still struggling upon this earth. The angels and saints were present around me, along with your prayers from your domestic churches at home, which kept the spirit of Holy Week and the Octave vibrant and alive.

As I had mentioned in an earlier Lap Top, I had been invited by a nearby pastor to join in the Triduum celebrations at his parish since another pastor who, like me, is alone and would be joining together with him and his associate. I thought about it but determined that HNOJ needed the liturgies celebrated here to sanctify and make holy the strange nature of this year's Lent and Easter celebrations. I received great encouragement for this decision as I watched our Holy Father celebrate the Triduum liturgies in an altered state within St. Peter's Basilica. Even though our church is not extensively decorated, as it has been in the past for Easter, the joy and spirit of the triumphant resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is permeating throughout the church none the less. I am encouraged by the encounters I have had with some of our HNOJ family members stopping into church for a visit and prayer time. I too have made time each day to offer some of the liturgy of the hours in church rather than my spot in the rectory to be present and watching with Him for you and me. **Just to let you know, I make every effort to have our church open by 10:00am and close it around 7:00pm each day.** Adults have been visiting and that is great. I want to encourage our parents to take a moment, during this time of great life upheaval, to keep your children in communion with Jesus and visit frequently His church for prayer and quiet time, to afford a variation to the "new norm" that has become your lives recently. I hope to run into you during my times of prayer in the days ahead.

Finally, I want to offer my gratitude to all who have responded to our plea for continued support during this time of pandemic. I am deeply grateful to a former member of HNOJ who sent a \$1,000.00 offering in memory of her dear mother Florence which was part of our Easter offering. The Easter offering will stay open, for the foreseeable future, to incorporate donations forthcoming. I still want to encourage WeShare electronic offering as a distinct vehicle to help us keep the weekly functions of your parish on point. Keep consulting our parish web site, it is up and running and, along with Flock Notes and Facebook, our main means of keeping touch.

That is all for now. **GO FORTH AND ANNOUNCE THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD. MANY BLESSINGS FOR THE WEEK!!!!**

Fr. Mike