

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This year we will celebrate Easter different than we have ever celebrated it in our lives. We will not go to church and worship our risen Lord in a crowded church, decorated with lots of bright colored flowers, beautiful music, dressed in our best clothes, and our hearts filled with joy. This year will be different but not unique. I was reflecting on that first Easter as the disciples gathered in that upper room. They were lost and afraid of what was before them. They were afraid to go outside because of the danger. I am sure the disciples were reflecting on the miracles and the beautiful teachings of our Lord, asking themselves what was the meaning of it all. The women have brought them the news that Jesus has risen, Peter and John rushed to the tomb, found it empty, and as scripture tells us, understood. The disciples were afraid to believe it could be true because the pain of Good Friday was still fresh in their hearts and minds, afraid they would be hurt again. The resurrection just seemed too good to be true. They were asking themselves could this time of terror and fear really be coming to an end. Then Jesus came into the room, and said Peace be with you, be not afraid. The scriptures tell us that he showed them the wounds on his hands and feet and in his side, he asked them for something to eat, all this to assure them He was not a ghost, but was real and was with them. In their homes with their families the disciples dared to believe that hope was possible, that the dark night of sin was defeated, and the bright light of the resurrection and the love God has for us triumphed. Jesus let them know that the last three years and yes, the last three days all had meaning. Jesus assured the disciples that death is not the final answer but it was life. In his great love, Jesus revealed to the disciples and to us that light triumphs over darkness, hope is more powerful than despair, that death and the fear of death is defeated forever, for all those who believe.

In this time of us being locked in our upper room, as questions enter our hearts and mind of what it will be like when this covid-19 emergency is over, we are called to remember that every Good Friday is followed by an Easter Sunday, to look for the day of celebration when this disease is defeated, and to hear the words of Jesus, peace be with you, be not afraid, I am with you always.

I pray that all the light, joy, hope, peace, and love of the resurrection of Jesus fill your hearts this Easter, as we continue our shelter in place, and for the rest of our lives.

Fr Tim