

A Reflection for

HOLY SATURDAY

Dear Parishioner in Christ,

Surprisingly, as the great Solemnity of Easter approaches, my thoughts turn to the day before—Holy Saturday! It is a strange and particular moment in the Easter Triduum. It does not commemorate any spectacular events like the Last Supper, or the Passion of Christ nor Resurrection on Easter Sunday morning.

This particular Holy Saturday is very similar to this pandemic which we are currently experiencing. Who of us would have ever imagined an Easter Sunday without a full congregation, CEOs (Christmas and Easter Only), exultant sacred music, Easter lilies, incense, Alleluias, baptismal promises and alike. We simply cannot fathom it.

However, it remains a mystery and I often wondered what the apostles did experience on that truly, long, and lonely day. I am sure that they must have been weighted down by the harrowing events of the previous days, yet in the midst of their fatigue and doubt, it would seem that HOPE was not completely exhausted nor non-existent.

It must have been HOPE that made the women decide to visit the tomb with spices as soon as the Sabbath had passed. It must have been HOPE that made Peter and John run to the tomb when Mary Magdalene told them it was empty.

Perhaps it was Jesus' clear predictions of his impending Death and Resurrection which were echoing and resounding through the silence of that first Holy Saturday. Moreover, it was perhaps their persistent HOPE that life that truly sprang from the depths of Jesus' soul could ever be diminished by death's finality. Consequently, real life with Jesus had definitely inscribed an indelible HOPE in their heart of hearts!

This unusual Holy Saturday calls me to that same HOPE that I want to incorporate in my daily life as a Carmelite priest. It is the deep FAITH in Jesus' Resurrection which is the basis of that HOPE of eternal life and that same HOPE that empowers me to bear patiently the ebb and flow of my life experiences.

Therefore, I am convinced that there lies in all of us a quiet and underlying JOY and a deep PEACE knowing that LIFE is stronger than death, LOVE is stronger than fear, and that HOPE is stronger than despair.

Perhaps it is the words of the poet, Emily Dickerson who has caught my attention about the real meaning of Christ's selfless actions of his last moments when she wrote: "had these days not been, or they cease to be—how smitten, how superfluous were every other day..."

It is with this same HOPE that this pandemic would cease to be. It is the same HOPE I do offer all of you a blessed, HOPE-filled, and Holy Easter!

I sincerely HOPE that you take to heart the words of Saint Paul who truly captures the essence of the Paschal Mystery when he says: "God who did not spare His only Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things..."

I wish every one of you an Easter Season of 50 days of endless HOPE!

Paz en Cristo,



Fr. David Fontaine, O. Carm, Pastor

P.S. "This too shall pass!"