



IMMACULATE HEART^{OF}MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR APRIL 19, 2020

Dear friends in the Risen Lord,

The Church knows how to celebrate, and in normal times we pull out all the stops in the liturgies of the Sacred Triduum and Easter. But these are not normal times. I'm very proud of our team who very quickly arranged for the livestreaming of those liturgies and brought them to life with such stark beauty, but obviously something was missing: YOU!

I so missed the opportunity to wash your feet and see you wash one another's; I missed praying for you as you came forward to venerate the Cross; I missed celebrating Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist with our parish's Elect and Candidates. I'm consoled to learn that many hundreds of households are participating in our livestreamed liturgies or viewing them later in the archive. But please know that I very much miss being with you in person.

Last Sunday we began a 50-day celebration of the Lord's victory over sin and death. But how are we to keep our "Easter duty" in a year like this one, when there's nowhere to go to feel like we've done something? It will have to be this: to look around and remember where the signs of Easter's victory are. Who are the people who show us what risen life will be like? Where have we seen a vision of this world the way it needs to be? That shouldn't be hard; heroes are not difficult to find: doctors and nurses, healthcare workers and first responders, public health professionals and medical researchers—and all who lovingly accept the present deprivations in order to save lives. We hold them in front of us, and ask God for the grace to live as if we were already citizens of the new place that one day will be ours.

It's well for us to remember that those who first heard the Easter proclamation were in exactly the same position relative to the risen Christ as we are. Their faith was based on the apostolic witnesses, who experienced Jesus as alive, and believed in him as Lord and Messiah. Even in this public health crisis, it is no more difficult for us to make this the center of our lives than it was for those who first believed.

Whether the proclamation "Christ is risen!" is spoken in amazement in Aramaic or written with quills on vellum in Latin, or tapped out on a computer or in a tweet, the reality remains precisely the same: Our lives as baptized people must validate this proclamation. The life of Christ who is risen has been given to us. We must receive it wholly and live it daily. Wherever we find ourselves, there we are. And there is where salvation is possible. This was true yesterday; it is true today; and it will be true always. We have 50 days to celebrate all of this. We have a lifetime to ponder it.

Easter peace!