



Dear Friends in Christ,

Easter 2019

When we come to the Easter Vigil and the glorious services of the Festival of the Resurrection, there is one triumphant thought that should permeate every inch of your being. That thought is **DEATH IS NOT THE END, BUT THE BEGINNING!** We have this conviction because we know for certainty that when the Lord Jesus was placed in the tomb for dead, there was no guard strong enough, no hole deep enough, no ruler powerful enough to hold Him captive in the earth. His divine promise to us was, "And on the third day, I will be raised!" And so we come to celebrate a risen Savior, the Lord of Life, the Conqueror of Death, our **RISEN CHRIST!**

But I ask you, "What difference will knowing and celebrating this risen Christ make in your life and in our wonderful parishes?" You know well that we have experienced such meaningful growth and development. There has been a new energy and an explosion of commitment. What is the source of this? It is not the priests or deacons, thankful as you may be for them. It is not the various councils, societies or guilds, appreciative as we are for their dedication. Everything that is happening among us has but one source: **the power and presence of God stirring us to new devotion and commitment!** He, and He alone, is our Motivator and inspires us to attempt things we never dreamed possible.

In the graphic above, you see the words, ". . . and found the stone rolled away." That was the experience of the women who went to the tomb on that first Easter morning. That simple sentence gives us our mandate for the future. We must be in the business of **ROLLING STONES AWAY** for one another - for those who are down on their luck, cold, and hungry, and for those who are in our very midst and need us to lift their stones. That is my challenge to our parishes. Let us entrust ourselves to the risen Christ as never before, and ask Him to use us to accomplish His will for the good of St. Mary & St. John Churches and the glory of our risen Lord! You can count on me, and I am counting on you – and all for the dear Lord!

*In His love,
Fr. Craig*