

# ST. MARY'S CHURCH

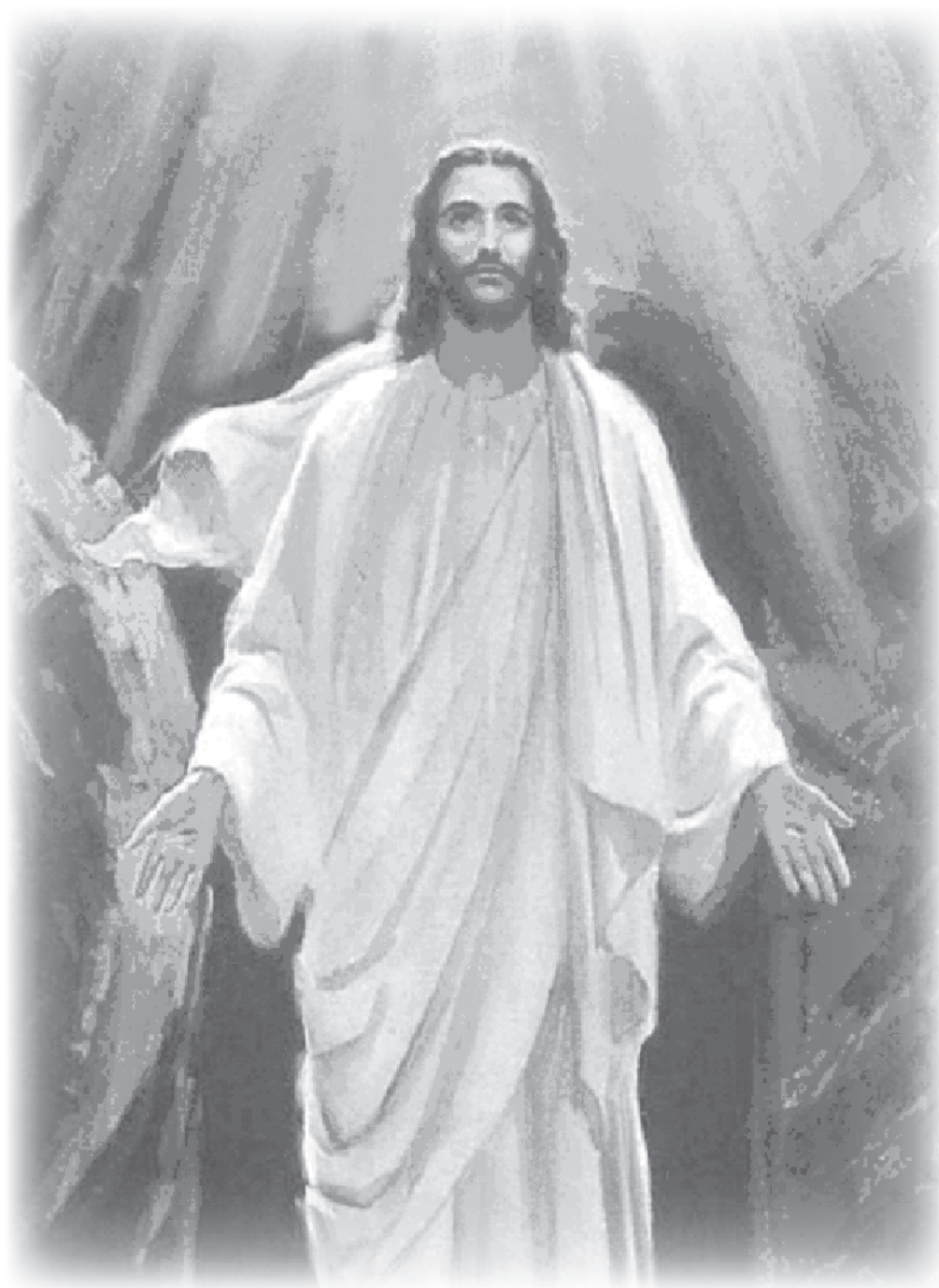
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Fr. Charles Forget, **Pastor**

Jayne Williams, **Office Administrator**



*Christ is Risen!*

## EASTER SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S RESURRECTION

### Dying, You Destroyed Our Death!

A few years ago, while presiding at a funeral in a funeral home, I was seated off to the side of the chapel as a member of the family described the life of the deceased. As he spoke my eyes wandered to the bronze urn of ashes and the simple wooden cross that was suspended above it on a pole. I wondered why they were using a cross without a corpus as most Catholic funerals I've attended have always used the crucifix as the principal symbol accompanying the funeral rites of a Roman Catholic. Perhaps it was an oversight or simply a request from the family, but it got me to thinking about the powerful witness of a cross with an image of Christ hanging upon it - the crucifix.



Some might say that the sight of Christ hanging on the cross is far too gruesome for the sensibilities of those who prefer to think of Christ as triumphant and risen. They might hold that the cross just by itself is a great sign and symbol of Our Lord's tremendous love when he hung upon that intersection of vertical and horizontal wooden beams and gave his life for us. The fact that his lifeless body was taken down from that cross and laid in a tomb until he rose from death to life again, might all the more show the plain, simple cross serves as all we need to remember Christ's love that went to death. But I don't agree.

For example, suppose a family who had a loved one in a wheelchair most of their life were to experience the awful pain of that person's death. After the family member was dead and buried, would they prefer to think of their lost loved one by the symbol of an empty wheelchair or would they not desire to see and remember their beloved sitting in the wheelchair as they had always known them? I would think it would be the latter. Or if the cross without the body of Christ on it were a preferred symbol, would it not be the equivalent of a lone, solitary mode of torture and death serving as a mere reminder of the One who actually hung upon it.

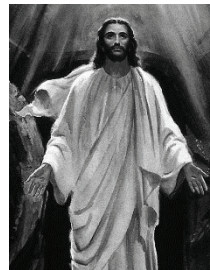
Throughout the history of the Church iconography of the saints always showed the individual saints holding some symbol of their life and belief in God. St. Peregrine, the patron saint of all those suffering with cancer, is always shown on holy cards and in statue images pointing to the cancer in his leg. One knows unmistakably that this image, no matter what the facial features truly were of the saint, is depicting St. Peregrine, patron of cancer victims. St. Joseph is often revealed in statues as holding an axe or a wood saw in order to show that he was a carpenter. St. Sebastian, who was shot full of arrows, is always depicted with the arrows still in his flesh and St. Cecilia, the patron of music and musicians shown holding a small organ.

The point is that there is no need for a separation of Christ from the Cross in order to emphasize only that Christ is risen and that somehow his death is a past-event. St. Paul himself related how we fill up in our own human flesh the sufferings that are left

wanting to the passion of Christ. Is St. Paul suggesting that Christ did not complete his work of redemption in dying on the cross? Not at all. Paul is telling us that there is still suffering that will continue until the Lord's return that is part of the work of the Church. After the resurrection of Christ, St. Paul also went to Athens to make converts. There he spoke eloquently among the people of sophistication of the resurrection of Jesus and its power for our lives, but he only made a small number of converts, who, after hearing Paul's message said, "We will hear you again." However, on the long walk back to Corinth, Paul had time to think about the words he had said to the Athenians and the lack of converts it made, and, upon arriving back home in Corinth wrote that "I am resolved from now on to preach Christ and him crucified." The cross by itself without Christ, cannot save. While it stands as a powerful symbol which universally speaks of the One who hung upon it, it is only part of the story. The cross with Christ speaks volumes on the love God has for us in the great mystery of redemption. It calls out to us to look to the One who, by throwing wide his arms on its beams, embraced the world with forgiveness and saved it from itself. Satan was defeated in Christ crucified.

### Rising, You Restored Our Life!

Nature shows us with every new year that that which dies comes back to life again in the cycle of all things living. Each night, with its looming and eventual all-consuming darkness, leads to a pre-dawn dimness that itself must give way to the dawning of a new day with the rising of the morning sun. And why would it not also be so for the body that dies? Would it not stand to reason that the body too would rise again to life as at spring? Well, yes and no. The body is prone to age and decline and decay and, when it no longer has life in it, it is dead, at least according to the laws of nature as God has deigned it to be.



All this changed when Christ in time was dying on the Cross of Calvary. Reaching back into the past to the time of Adam and Eve and in all subsequent years and in the lives of all sinful humanity, Christ took their sins upon Himself. For the people of his day who were hardhearted against him and the love he espoused, he took their sins upon Himself. And as God, clothed in human flesh, He reached into the future to the time of his return to the earth at the end of days and pulled the sins of all humankind back towards Himself and, before breathing his last gave the world its final and all-consuming absolution in uttering "It is finished." If Christ had merely been a human sacrificing his life for a cause, for a good and for others, he would no longer be remembered and our lives would remain untouched and unchanged by this solitary act of a man from long ago. Yet as the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour and Redeemer of all sinful humanity, this act of dying brought the world to the brink of being saved and forever changed. Why? Because of the fact that this one life-altering

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act of dying as our replacement would bring about the forgiveness of our sins forever, though it would remain incomplete had Jesus not also risen from that dying and death. The resurrection of Christ completed what Christ had accomplished in His death. His death served to issue the greatest blow to be given to sin, darkness and death. It put an end to death itself - His death destroyed death. And so, in His rising, the work of restoration was accomplished in that Christ restored us to our rightful relationship with his Father and ours.

All this can ring hollow, of course, if it doesn't touch our lives, and it most certainly does. In fact, it not only is meant to penetrate our hearts but to forever change them. In the resurrection we have a destiny, not to a grave or nothingness but to life forever with God. All the tragedies, untimely deaths and unforeseeable circumstances of life are not the ends of a road but are like the wheels of a great plane at takeoff. Life is the runway and the departure of the wheels from the tarmac makes one airborne into a new state of being called "flight". While this comparison may be a bit cheesy, the reality of the life Jesus promised to us is anything but. Jesus came, not to offer us a life of mediocre happiness, but abundant life. If we are to have that kind of life in our earthly existence, what must the life in eternity be like?

I have lived and traversed a bit on this planet for just sixty-five years and every fiber of my being tells me, shouts at me, screams at me.... that this *is not* all there is. As a priest, every funeral I have presided at, while it may not always have been met by faith-filled mourners, brought us all to the very edge of life and death itself. All our living and especially after our death we are destined by an eternal summons to live with God in the foreverness that is eternity. St. Paul said that "if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord, so that, alive or dead we belong to the Lord". But notice that St. Paul uses the word "if". "If" we live for the Lord in the here and now, in this short, mysterious, perplexing and wonderful life, coming to know Him, allowing Him not just space but the prime and highest place in our lives, we can know that we will live with Him forever.

How could we belong to the Lord forever if this is all there is to our existence, if there is not an eternity? Hell, itself, has an eternity which should be the dread of all people of the earth as it is chosen by our living now. It would be silly to think that the God who made us to be relational and to live in relationships would not make us so only for a short while on this earth. We have been made relational with one another and with God for we were made with an eternal soul to live in relationship forever. What begins now in this world endures forever in the next. And that is why our longings in this life go beyond the earth and are for things beyond our sight - they are a God-given longing for that which we have not yet tasted and can only for a time imagine. Yet one day we will see!

**Lord Jesus, come in glory!**

*(Blessed Easter. Fr. Charles)*

**MASS**  **SCHEDULE & INTENTIONS**

Tues April 2	NO MASS
Wed April 3	NO MASS
Thurs April 4	NO MASS
Friday April 5	
7:30am	Holy Hour
8:30am	✠Agatha Tawaststjerna Requested by the Hollingshead Family
Sat April 6	FIRST SATURDAY MASS
8:30am	✠Michael Fay Requested by Anne Fay
3:30 to 4:00pm	Confessions
4:30pm	✠John Scanlon Requested by Susie & John Unsworth
Sunday April 7	
9:00am	For the People
11:00am	✠Deceased Members of the Ford Family Requested by Clare & Gene Bisogno

*Please Pray for the Sick*

Dorothy Dynes, Margot Brandreth, Jean Ferguson, Fred Coulson, Hilary Joseph, Henry Niepalla, Mary Little, Kaz Watroba, Albert Sant & Tracy Rivers, Rose Flanagan, Teresa & Feliks Kosierb.

*Please Pray for the Recently Deceased*

The Sanctuary Lamp Burns  
For the Intentions of Tiago Furtado  
From March 31<sup>st</sup> to April 6<sup>th</sup>



Regular Collection Mar 24<sup>th</sup> \$4267.00 (Inc PAG)



**Easter Flowers**

If anyone is interested in donating to the Easter Flowers, there are envelopes at either entrance to the church. Thank You



**Easter Sunday  
Resurrection of the Lord  
March 31, 2024**



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