

Catholic Parish of Lindfield-Killara

Diocese of Broken Bay

EASTER SUNDAY 12 – 4 – 20
THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD
'The season of glad song has come' (Song of Songs 2:12)

This week: Acts 10:34, 37-43; Col 3:1-4 or 1 Cor 5:6-8; John 20:1-9;



Dear sisters and brothers in the parish,

Well, a very different Easter. But hopefully a more powerful one than ever, as we reflect on the Christian mystery of death and resurrection.

Fr Thomas, the Parish Staff and I wish you a very happy Easter in these different times. Fr Thomas and I would also like to thank those who have so strongly contributed their services in these changed times: our Easter celebrations normally involve an extensive team of parishioners—this year we are grateful to a much smaller, but nevertheless dedicated, band who have worked hard to bring you our Easter celebrations—our parish staff, the small representative group of our music

ministry, those who prepared and decorated the church for the Easter Vigil, and our Youth Ministry Team led by Jean Shatek. We are very blessed.

Our celebration this weekend bears the message that new life is to be found through the way of the Cross. May this be our own discovery. The restrictions imposed by the public health emergency challenge us to discover hidden opportunities in our physical separation from community—time for prayer, for inner stilling, for finding new and creative ways for deeper connections. Our challenge is to retain the lessons we can learn through these times and not too easily return to the activity-based madness that preceded them. We are being challenged to a more 'contemplative' existence. Grace works in strange ways!

A very happy Easter to you all in these very different and challenging times..

Fr Colin

POPE FRANCIS' MESSAGE TO US ALL FOR THIS HOLY WEEK



Dear friends, good evening!

This evening I have the chance to enter your homes in a different way than usual. If you allow me, I would like to have a conversation with you for a few moments, in this time of difficulty and of suffering. I can imagine

you in your families, living an unusual life to avoid contagion. I am thinking of the liveliness of children and young people, who cannot go out, attend school, live their lives. I have in my heart all the families, especially those who have a loved one who is sick or who have unfortunately experienced mourning due to the coronavirus or other causes. These days I often think about people who are alone, and for whom it is more difficult to face these moments. Above all I think of the elderly, who are very dear to me.

I cannot forget those who are sick with coronavirus, people who are in hospital. I am aware of the generosity of those who put themselves at risk for the treatment of this pandemic or to guarantee the essential services to society. So many heroes, every day, at every hour! I also remember how many are in financial straits and are worried about work and the future. A thought also goes out to prison inmates, whose pain is compounded by fear of the epidemic, for themselves and their loved ones; I think of the homeless, who do not have a home to protect them.

It is a difficult time for everyone. For many, very difficult. The Pope knows this and, with these words, he wants to tell

everyone of his closeness and affection. Let us try, if we can, to make the best use of this time: let us be generous; let us help those in need in our neighbourhood; let us look out for the loneliest people, perhaps by telephone or social networks; let us pray to the Lord for those who are in difficulty in Italy and in the world. Even if we are isolated, thought and spirit can go far with the creativity of love. This is what we need today: the creativity of love. This is what is needed today: the creativity of love.

We will celebrate Holy Week in a truly unusual way, which manifests and sums up the message of the Gospel, that of God's boundless love. And in the silence of our cities, the Easter Gospel will resound. The Apostle Paul says: "And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him Who died for them and was raised again" (2 Cor 5:15). In the risen Jesus, life conquered death. This Paschal faith nourishes our hope. I would like to share it with you this evening. It is the hope of a better time, in which we can be better, finally freed from evil and from this pandemic. It is a hope: hope does not disappoint; it is not an illusion, it is a hope.

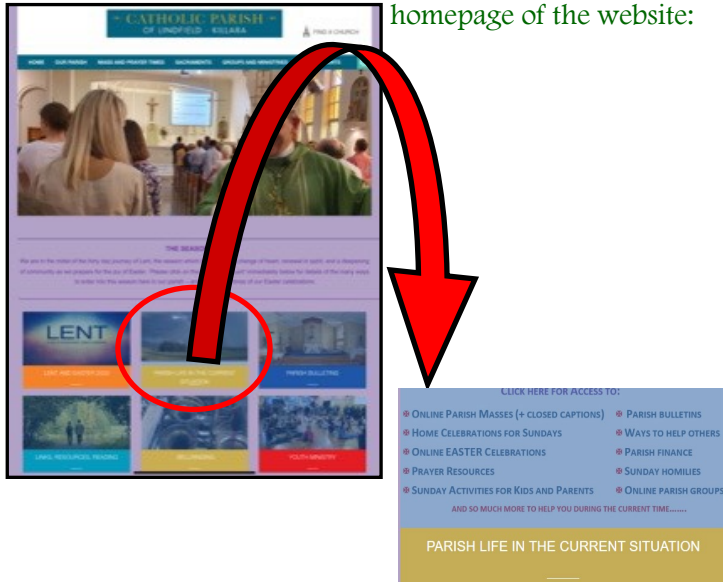
Beside each other, in love and patience, we can prepare a better time in these days. Thank you for allowing me into your homes. Make a gesture of tenderness towards those who suffer, towards children, and towards the elderly. Tell them that the Pope is close and pray, that the Lord will soon deliver us all from evil. And you, pray for me. Have a good dinner. See you soon!

(the video — with closed captions — of Pope Francis delivering this message is available on the special page of our website—scroll down to Resource IV: 'Words and Prayers from Pope Francis')



OUR PARISH LIFE ONLINE

Please keep visiting the special part of our parish website (www.lindfieldkillara.org.au) where we keep expanding the resources for you online: Mass in our parish, helps for prayer, home Sunday liturgies, helps for leading the kids through a Sunday reflection and much much more. All accessible through the hotlink box 'Parish Life in the Current Situation' on the homepage of the website:



THE HIGH COURT ACQUITTAL OF CARDINAL GEORGE PELL

Bishop Anthony Randazzo has written a letter to us on this subject and you'll find it on the parish website under 'News and Events' → 'Stop Press'.

PARISH FINANCE REPORT IN THE CURRENT SITUATION

As explained elsewhere in the bulletin our parish income has been devastated in the current public health emergency—we have no weekly collections and our other source of income—rental of parish facilities—has also stopped.

Comparing this week to the weekend of 1st March (before the current crisis took effect) our income on the two collections has declined as follows:

First Collection (which provides for Frs Colin & Thomas & also supports the fund providing for elderly and sick priests of the diocese): **a decline of \$752 PER WEEK.**
(an improvement of \$1186 since last week—thank you!)

Second Collection (which provides all the operating costs of the parish): **a decline of \$1669 PER WEEK**
(an improvement of \$800 since last week—thank you!)

We also do have a number of parishioners who already contribute electronically on a periodical basis and this (hopefully) will continue. However this doesn't change the significance of the above figures—since that is a comparison based on regular weekly income, not periodical income.

Many many thanks to those who have been in touch over the last two weeks to make arrangements for electronic giving or to increase their existing electronic giving (which has been the source of the income on the two collections listed above) .

If you haven't yet done this and would be able to do so please see page 5 of this bulletin or the special section of our website 'Parish Life in the Current Circumstances' and scroll down to how you can support our parish financially. Or just contact Alison directly—alison@lindfieldkillara.org.au

Fr Colin

AN EASTER REFLECTION

~ SUFFERING ~

Pain teaches a most counterintuitive thing—that we must go down before we even know what up is. In terms of the ego, most religions teach in some way that we all must “die before we die, and then we will not be afraid of dying.” Suffering of some sort seems to be the only thing strong enough to destabilise our arrogance and our ignorance. I would define suffering very simply as “whenever you are not in control.”

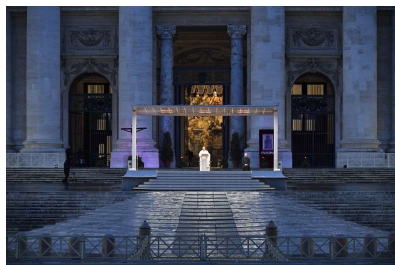
If religion cannot find a meaning for human suffering, humanity is in major trouble. All healthy religion shows you what to do with your pain. Great religion shows you what to do with the absurd, the tragic, the nonsensical, the unjust.

If we do not transform our pain, we will most assuredly transmit it.

If there isn't some way to find some deeper meaning to our suffering, to find that God is somewhere in it, and can even use it for good, we will normally close up and close down. The natural movement of the ego is to protect itself so as not to be hurt again. The soul just wants meaning, and then it can live.

Fr Richard Rohr ofm

Adapted from Things Hidden: Scripture as Spirituality, p. 25



WILL WE LISTEN TO THE POPE'S URGENT PLEA TO THE CITY AND THE WORLD?

On 27th March, in a most poignant scene, Pope Francis stood before a completely empty St Peter's Square and delivered an extraordinary Urbi et Orbi (“to the city and to the world”) blessing. The text of his address was printed on the front page of last weekend's bulletin. In this article Dominique Quinio reflects on the significance of that address. This is taken from the online Catholic journal ‘La Croix International’ - well worth subscribing to and offering a highly discounted one month trial at the moment).

Various photos accentuate the striking image of this lone man dressed in white, tiny in the midst of a vast, empty square usually full of people... in the reflections of cobblestones shimmering with rain, lit by a few torches.

The ochre walls of the basilica and the white colonnades seem to be but a decoration, providing a frame for the speech's full magnitude.

We watched an old man walk with difficulty, needing help to negotiate steps, pray & meditate before a crucifix & an icon of the Virgin Mary. For those turned off by the pomp & gold of so many official ceremonies, this was quite the antidote!

Francis pointed out how much the coronavirus pandemic "exposes our vulnerability". And he reminded us of our responsibilities.

"We were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet," he said.

We just continued on our way, as if nothing had happened. The Pope therefore invited us not to continue as before, but to "seize this time of trial as a time of choosing".

This is why the image of the Pope in this vast, empty piazza will remain emblematic of Lent 2020 for Catholics around the world.

But the Pope's words were also an invitation, as his messages most often are, to all people of goodwill. Because it is the responsibility of everyone in the world to convert and hear the cry of the poor and the earth.

This is the challenge put forth by a man who appeared so alone and fragile ("The Pope? How many divisions has he got?" mocked Stalin).

For those of us who normally take part in Eucharistic celebrations, being forced to spend this Lent and Easter in confinement is also an opportunity.

It can help us listen to the women and men who are usually deprived of the Eucharist for long periods of time, whether they live in certain areas of the Amazon, Africa, or far-flung regions of our own countries; whether age or disability forces them to stay at home; or whether they are deprived of the Eucharist because of Church rules...

Eucharistic fasting takes us out of our comfort zone and routines. It can help us rediscover the profound meaning of the Sunday gathering, and realise what truly defines us as Catholics.

"A time to choose what matters & what passes away, a time to separate what's necessary from what's not," the Pope said.

Will the world have this wisdom? There is no doubt that lessons will be drawn from the COVID-19 crisis in the health, scientific and political fields (a variety of research will take on this mission).

But with the praiseworthy intention of re-igniting the world's economic engine, and in the euphoria of victory over the pandemic, will there be voices that urge us to give up "feeling powerful and able to do anything; (to stop being) greedy for profit"?

They are the voices that speak to the city (us) and to the world (others).

**We're here, we're online:
and here are some ways to join in online parish gatherings.....**

I. OUR PARISH CHRISTIAN MEDITATION GROUP

Our parish has for the last few years had a weekly Christian Meditation Group. This group is now gathering **online** and invites anyone to join them for a short time of prayer **each Wednesday morning at 8am.**

The linkup takes place using Zoom – the organisers will simply send you an email which provides you with a link to click on at the appropriate time, along with a 'Meeting ID' and a password which you enter when requested. Then off you go.

If you haven't tried Christian meditation before don't worry – our lovely group will help you to get introduced to this gentle way of praying.

If you'd like to join the group please email either Kay (Kay.Hunt@optusnet.com.au) or Catherine (catherinecwillis@gmail.com)

II. OUR PARISH SCRIPTURE STUDY SESSIONS

are also taking place online—both the daytime group, which is working through St Paul's Letter to the Romans, and the evening group, which is still having Fr Colin's introductory talks on the Scriptures and scripture study. These meetings take place through the online facility of Zoom. **If you're not already in these groups and would like to be please contact Fr Colin (94167195) or email (colin@lindfieldkillara.org.au).** The daytime Scripture Group will gather online on the first & third Thursdays of each month at 11am (next meeting **THIS** Thursday 16th April). The date for the next gathering of the evening Scripture study group will be advised in next week's bulletin.

**We'll be looking at more ways that we can gather as a community online.
Please keep watching the bulletin and the special section of our parish website.**



At this time of the year and over coming weeks the Easter Offering envelopes are normally in the churches.

The Easter Offerings are not retained personally by the priests but are a vital supplement to the First Collection income which provides for the priests of the parish and for the health care of priests across the diocese and the retirement care of older priests. This fund depends very much on the income raised by Christmas and Easter Offerings.

If you are able to make an Easter Offering donation electronically please either use the form on the page overleaf or use the overleaf details to make a direct debit from your account to our **First Collection account.** In the transfer please note that it is for 'Easter Offering'.

Many thanks.

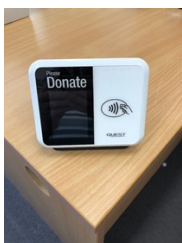


Our thoughts and prayers are very much with our catechumens who have been preparing for baptism this Easter and our candidates who have been preparing for reception into the Church this Easter. Sadly the present situation does not permit the public celebration of the Easter Vigil and therefore of the rites of welcome for those who have prepared for so long. Let's keep them in our prayers in a special way this Easter.

I have written to all concerned assuring them that, in the Spirit, they are most certainly welcomed into our fellowship of faith this Easter, and that we look forward to the day when we can celebrate that sacramentally with them. *Fr Colin*

Some notices:

- ◆ The bulletin of course is now largely an e-edition, available on the parish website by Friday evening prior to each Sunday, and also mailed out to those who want it on the following Tuesday. If you're not on Philita's bulletin e-list and you would like to be please email her at philita@lindfieldkillara.org.au. If you know of someone who is isolated and does not have internet access perhaps you could drop them a copy of the bulletin.
- ◆ We will leave a small number of printed copies of the bulletin near one of the doors of both our churches.
- ◆ Please don't forget that there are a number of resources for helping your children celebrate on Sundays and to reflect on the Scripture readings. These can be found in the special section of our parish website 'Parish Life in the Current Situation'.
- ◆ The Parish Office is continuing to operate, though only one staff member is there at a time—the rest of the staff are working from home. For public health it's not possible to visit the office so please make contact by phone or email and the staff will assist you. **This week the Parish Office will be accessible on Tuesday and Friday only.**



TAP AND GO is accessible again. The two machines are now fixed against the glass wall of 'The Basement' at the rear of and underneath Lindfield church. Tap donations to both collections can be made at any time, night or day, by tapping

against the glass.

We of course are not encouraging unnecessary excursions from your home, but if this works in with your daily exercise or your visit to the supermarket the devices are there for you.

SUPPORTING OUR PARISH FINANCIALLY AT THIS TIME

We face a great challenge at this time as a parish since most of our income comes from the weekly collections which of course are not taking place in the absence of the public celebration of Mass. Our second source of income comes from the rental of parish halls & meeting rooms—this has also ceased. We very much need your support.

There are two ways that you can arrange to contribute to our First and Second Collections electronically (a reminder:

- ◇ the First Collection provides for Frs Colin and Thomas and also provides for the fund which provides for health care for priests, and supports sick and retired clergy
- ◇ the Second Collection provides for all the running costs of the parish and its services)

To contribute electronically:

A. to contribute by direct debit from your bank account our account details are:

First Collection: BSB 062 784 Acct 1116 8002 (Lindfield Killara Parish Pastoral Revenue Account)

Second Collection: BSB 062 784 Acct 1116 8001 (Lindfield Killara Parish Church Account)

B. to arrange for a recurrent charge to your credit card please return the form below to the Parish Office (please email to accounts@lindfieldkillara.org.au)

AUTHORITY FOR RECURRENT PERIODIC PAYMENT BY CREDIT CARD

I wish to use my credit card to make my regular parishioner contributions to the Catholic Parish of Lindfield-Killara (the Merchant).

I hereby authorise the Merchant to debit my Card account with the amount and at the intervals specified below. This authority shall stand, as specified, until I notify the Merchant in writing of its cancellation.

Surname: _____ Given Names: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Cardholder's signature: _____ Date: __/__/

Type of card (please circle): **MASTERCARD** **VISA**

Card Number:

□□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□

Expiry date: □□ / □□

I authorise the following periodic payment(s) to be made:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| A. FIRST COLLECTION: | Amount: \$ _____ | Each: Month / Quarterly |
| B. SECOND COLLECTION: | Amount: \$ _____ | Each: Month / Quarterly |
| C. CFW COLLECTION: | Amount: \$ _____ | Each: Tri-Annual (Aug, Nov, May) |

If you would prefer to obtain a set of Weekly Envelopes for your Second Collection contribution please complete your name and address details above and tick here

Please return this form to the Parish Office in person or by mail or by email to accounts@lindfieldkillara.org.au

The information provided in this form is collected and handled in accordance with the Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay's Privacy Policy available on the website at www.dbb.org.au

耶穌復活主日 12.4.2020

讀經一（我們在他從死者中復活後，與他同食共飲。）

恭讀聖徒大事錄 10:34,37-43

那時候，伯多祿說：「你們都知道：在若翰宣講洗禮以後，從加里肋亞開始，在全猶太所發生的事：天主怎樣以聖神和德能，傳了納匝肋人耶穌，使他巡行各處，施恩行善，治好一切受魔鬼壓制的人，因為天主同他在一起。

「耶穌在猶太人地區，及在耶路撒冷所行一切，我們都是見證人。但是，他們卻把耶穌懸在木架上，殺死了。第三天，天主使他復活了，叫他顯現出來，不是給所有百姓，而是給天主所預先揀選的見證人，就是給我們這些、在他從死者中復活後，與他同食共飲的人。

「他吩咐我們向百姓講道，指證他就是天主所立：生者與死者的判官。一切先知都為他作證：凡信他的人，賴他的名字，都要獲得罪赦。」——上主的話。（默想片刻）

答唱詠 詠118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

【答】：這是上主所安排的一天，我們應該為此鼓舞喜歡。（詠118:24）（詠唱見96頁）

或

亞肋路亞。亞肋路亞。亞肋路亞。（詠唱見96頁）

領：請你們讚頌上主，因為他是美善寬仁，他的仁慈永遠常存。願以色列人讚美說：他的仁慈永遠常存。【答】

領：上主的右手將我高舉；上主的右手大顯威能。我不至於死，必要生存，並要宣揚上主的工程。【答】

領：匠人棄而不用，反而成了屋角的基石；這是上主所作的所為，在我們眼中，神妙莫測。【答】

讀經二（你們就該追求天上的事；在那裡，有基督坐在天主的右邊。）

恭讀聖保祿宗徒致哥羅森人書 3:1-4

弟兄姊妹們：

你們既然與基督一同復活了，就該追求天上的事；在那裡，有基督坐在天主的右邊。你們該思念天上的事，不該思念地上的事，因為你們已經死了，你們的生命，已與基督一同藏在天主內；當基督、我們的生命，顯現時，那時，你們也要與他一同，出現在光榮之中。——上主的話。（默想片刻）

Or

（你們應把舊酵母除淨，好使你們成為新和的麵團。）

恭讀聖保祿宗徒致格林多人前書 5:6-8

弟兄姊妹們：

你們豈不知道：少許的酵母，能使整個麵團發酵嗎？你們應把舊酵母除淨，好使你們成為新和的麵團，正如你們原是新餅一樣，因為我們的逾越節羔羊基督，已被祭殺，作了犧牲。所以，我們過節，不可用舊酵母，也不可用奸詐和邪惡的酵母，而只可用純潔和真誠的無酵餅。——上主的話。（默想片刻）

復活節讚歌

起立

在耶穌復活主日該誦念；或詠唱，見97-105頁。八日慶期內可隨意念或詠唱。

領：各位基督徒，請向逾越節羔羊，獻上讚頌之祭。

眾：羔羊贖回了羊群；聖潔無罪的基督，使罪人與天父和好。

領：生命與死亡展開奇妙的決鬥，生命的主宰，死而復活，永生永王。

眾：瑪利亞，請告訴我們，你在路上看見了什麼？

領：我看見永生基督的墓穴和他復活的光榮、作證的天使、頭巾和殮布。

眾：基督、我的希望、已經復活，他要在你們之先到加里肋亞。

領：我們知道，基督確實從死者中復活。勝利的君王，求你垂憐我們。

眾：亞孟。亞肋路亞。

福音前歡呼

領：亞肋路亞，亞肋路亞。（詠唱見106-108頁）

眾：亞肋路亞，亞肋路亞。

領：我們的逾越節羔羊基督，已被祭殺，作了犧牲；所以，我們要歡欣慶賀主的復活。（參閱格前 5:7-8）

眾：亞肋路亞，亞肋路亞。

福音（耶穌必須從死者中復活。）

恭讀聖若望福音 20:1-9

一周的第一天，清晨，天還黑的時候，瑪利亞瑪達肋納，來到墳墓那裡，看見石頭已從墓門挪開了。於是，她跑去見西滿伯多祿，及耶穌所愛的那另一個門徒，對他們說：「有人從墳墓中，把主搬走

了；我們不知道他們把他放在那裡。」

伯多祿便和那另一個門徒出來，到墳墓那裡去。兩人一起跑，但那另一個門徒，比伯多祿跑得快，先來到了墳墓那裡。他俯身看見了放著的殮布，卻沒有進去。

跟著他的西滿伯多祿，也來到了，進入了墳墓，看見了放著的殮布，也看見耶穌頭上的那塊汗巾，不同殮布放在一起，而在另一處捲著。

先來到墳墓的那個門徒，也進去了，一看見就相信了。

這是因為他們還不明白，耶穌必須從死者中復活的那段聖經。——上主的話。

（講道後默想片刻）

Or

福音（他復活了，並在你們之先，到加里肋亞去。）

恭讀聖瑪竇福音 28:1-10

安息日一過，一周的第一日，天快亮時，瑪利亞瑪達肋納，和另外一位瑪利亞，來看墳墓。忽然發生了大地震，因為上主的天使從天降來，上前把石頭滾開，坐在上面。天使的容貌好像閃電；他的衣服潔白如雪。看守的人由於怕他，嚇得打顫，變得好像死人一樣。

天使對婦女說：「你們不要害怕！我知道你們尋找被釘死的耶穌。他不在這裡，因為他已經照他所說的，復活了。你們來看看安放過他的地方；並且快去告訴他的門徒：他已經由死者中復活了。看！他在你們之先，到加里肋亞去；在那裡，你們要看見他。看！我已經告訴了你們。」

婦女們趕快離開墳墓，又恐懼，又非常喜樂，跑去報告耶穌的門徒。

忽然，耶穌迎面而來，對婦女們說：「願你們平安！」她們於是上前，抱住耶穌的腳，朝拜了他。耶穌對她們說：「不要害怕！你們去，報告我的兄弟，叫他們往加里肋亞去；他們要在那裡看見我。」——上主的話。（講道後默想片刻）

華人天主教會 北區中心主日彌撒12時-牧職修女
司徒美修女 0419- 426899

中心聯絡 Gloria Cheung ☎0416-118089主日彌
撒12時

FOR THE DIVIN

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

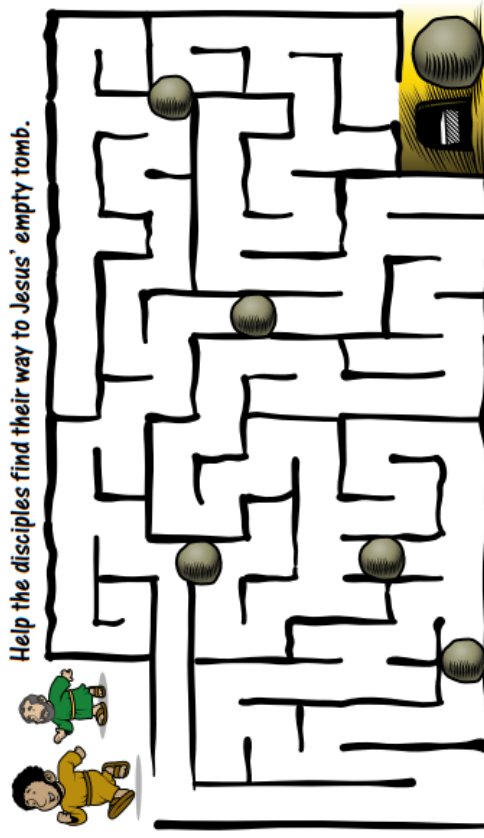
Jn 20:1-9

My name is

He is risen! Alleluia!



Help the disciples find their way to Jesus' empty tomb.



FR RICHARD ROHR OFM'S MEDITATION.....

It is true that your life is not about you; rather, "your life is hidden with Christ in God. He is your life, and when he is revealed, you will be revealed in all your glory with him" (Colossians 3:4).

Once our soul comes to its True Self, it can amazingly let go and be almost anything except selfish or separate. The True Self does not cling or grasp. It has already achieved its purpose by being more than by any specific doing of this or that. Finally, we have become a human being instead of a human doing. This is what we are practicing when we sit in contemplative prayer: we are practicing under-doing and assured failure, which radically rearranges our inner hardware after a while. And yet even in our pursuit of the True Self, we must be careful not to reject the parts of ourselves that are not there yet. The most courageous thing we will ever do is probably to accept that we are who we are. As Henri Nouwen once shared with me personally, he believed that original sin could only be described as "humanity's endless capacity for self-rejection."

All the truly transformed people I have ever met are characterized by what I would call radical humility. They are deeply convinced that they are drawing from another source; they are simply an instrument. Their genius is not their own; it is borrowed. They end up doing generative and expansive things precisely because they do not take first or

final responsibility for their gift; they don't worry too much about their failures, nor do they need to promote themselves. Their life is not their own, yet at some level they know that it has been given to them as a sacred trust. Such people just live in gratitude and confidence and try to let the flow continue through them. They know that love can be repaid by love alone.

In this time of crisis, we must commit to a posture of prayer and heart that opens us to deep trust and connection with God. Only then can we hold the reality of what is happening—both the tragic & the transformative. I am finding myself turning more often in these days to the simple Christian prayer of "Lord, have mercy." From our place of humility, God can work through us to help our loved ones, neighbors & the most vulnerable. As Francis of Assisi said right before he died in 1226, "I have done what was mine to do. Now you must do what is yours to do."

In the spiritual life, what we think we are doing is actually being done to us. All we can do is say yes to it. This True Self is ironically much more glorious, grounded, original, and free than any self-manufactured person could be. We are interrelated with being, participating with the life of God, while living out one little part of that life in our own exquisite form. The True Self neither postures nor pretends. It comes down to this: the soul and the True Self know that "my life is not about me, but I am about life."

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Nicholas Sutherland, Jesse Langford, Anthony Ellison, Ron Burke, Nena Umali, Wolfgang Liers, Cyril Ferriere, Alex Noble, William Wise, Lise Therese Ferriere, Ian Coffey, Maureen Hobbs, Russell Adams.

And for all those affected by COVID-19.

Food for the soul.....

I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said.

(Mt 28:5b-6a)

A VOICE THAT NEVER DIES

Easter is about many things. We celebrate God's power to overcome death, sin, and injustice, but we also celebrate the voices and wounds of the ones who died on Good Friday.

To illustrate this, I would like to recount one such voice, that of an anonymous, young woman who was brutally raped and murdered by the Salvadoran military in 1981, at a place fittingly called La Cruz. The story was reported by Mark Danner, a journalist.

He describes how, after this particular massacre, some soldiers told how one of their victims haunted them and how they could not get her out of their minds long after her death.

They had plundered a village and raped many of the women. One of these was a young woman, an evangelical Christian, whom had been raped many times in a single afternoon and subsequently tortured. However, throughout this all, this young woman, clinging to her belief in Christ, had sung hymns. Here's how one of the soldiers described it:

She kept on singing, too, even after they had shot her in the chest. She had lain there in La Cruz with the blood flowing from her chest, and had kept on singing—a bit weaker than before, but still singing. And the soldiers, stupefied, had watched and pointed. Then they had grown tired of the game and shot her again, and she sang still, and their wonder began to turn to fear—until finally they unsheathed their machetes and hacked her neck and at last the singing stopped. (The Massacre at El Mozote, N.Y., Vintage Books 1994, p. 78)

Gil Bailie, who recounts this story in his monumental book on the cross and non-violence, notes not just the remarkable similarity between her death and that of Jesus, but also the fact that, in both cases, resurrection means that their voices live on when everything about their deaths suggest that their voices should have died.

In Jesus' case, nobody witnessing his humiliating death on a lonely hillside, with his followers absent, would have predicted that this would be the most remembered death in history. The same is true for this young woman. Her rape and murder occurred in a very remote place and all of those who might have wanted to immortalise her story were also killed. Yet her voice survives and will, on doubt, continue to grow in importance, long after all those who violated and killed her

are forgotten. As both Jesus and this young girl illustrate, powerlessness and anonymity, linked to a heart that can sing the words: "Forgive them for they know not what they do!" while being raped and humiliated, ultimately become their opposite, power and immortality.

A death of this kind not only scars morally the conscience of its perpetrators and their sympathizers, it leaves something that can never be forgotten, a permanent echo that nobody will ever silence. What God raises up after Good Friday is also the voice of the one who died.

A critic reviewing Danner's book in the New York Times, tells how, after reading this story, he kept "straining" to hear the sound of that singing.

The task of Easter is to rekindle the creed within ourselves. The earliest Christians, immediately upon experiencing the resurrected Jesus, spontaneously voiced a one-line creed: "Jesus is Lord!" That does, in fact, say it all. When we affirm that Jesus has been raised from the dead and is Lord of this world we are saying everything else within our faith as well.

In essence, we are saying that God is ultimately still in charge of this universe, despite any indications to the contrary; that brutality and rape notwithstanding, at the end of the day violence, injustice, and sin will be silenced and overcome; that graciousness and gentleness, as manifested in Jesus, are ultimately what lies at the root of all reality; that this young woman, so brutally violated, has now been raised and lives, joyfully, in the heart of God; and that her death, like Jesus', is redemptive precisely because, like him, she too, in the face of helplessness before the worst brutality the world could perpetrate, could still say: "Forgive them for they know not what they do!"


To celebrate Easter is to affirm that all of this is true. But that also asks something of us:

it asks, as the critic in the New York Times so aptly put it, that we strain to hear the sound of that girl's singing, that we struggle to keep her, & her song, in our hearts. She is still alive in God's heart, & we must keep her alive in ours as well.

Why? Not for sentimental reasons, nor simply because her story is exceptional. No. We must keep her alive in our hearts because her song is the leaven, the yeast, of the resurrection and that, that alone, can raise us up to become exceptional too.

One of the tasks of Easter is to strain to hear the voices of Good Friday.

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