

CELEBRATE EASTER

Second Sunday of Easter – Sunday of Diving Mercy

Serenity is not the absence of trouble, but the presence of inner peace.

Acts 2:42-47

Changed by the Easter event, the first believers maintained a healthy unity, harmony among themselves despite differences, ‘community of believers was of one mind and one heart’. “All who believed were held together and had all things in common” and shared their possessions “according to each one’s need”. Distinctions as regards gender, race, ethnic background, socio-economic status, etc. were causes of friction and separation among them...but Easter changed everything! Belongingness to the saving cross and the death and resurrection of Christ changed them radically. They were a new people, and they were one, unified, harmonious group...they became a community in Christ!

Easter transformed their life and gave them new sense of belongingness in community!

Psalm 118

This is an all-embracing, universal, missionary Psalm inviting all people to thank God and proclaim His steadfast love. The Psalmist calls Israel (the people of God), the house of Aaron (the priestly class) and those who fear the Lord (the Gentile converts) – all people, including the Gentiles (heathens) to praise and proclaim God’s enduring love. The Church has been singing this Psalm at Easter as it is an all-inclusive Psalm, inviting all people, including the Gentiles proselytes to praise God.

**Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
For his mercy endures for ever.
Let the house of Israel say,
His mercy endures for ever...**

1 Peter 1:3-9

In this excerpt some of the great fundamental Christian truths come together: Calling God as Father (not a distant God); idea of being reborn (radical change) by an act (mercy) of God (begotten by God); rebirth (recreated) by the Spirit of God, not by man’s effort; reborn to a living hope; reborn to eternal life; reborn to victory over sin and death; reborn to an eternal, imperishable inheritance which is full of joy and so on.

At the heart of this excerpt is the truth that because the Christian is possessed by God, he has the inheritance which is “imperishable and unfading”. The inheritance of the Christian is

fullness of joy in God, which is waiting for him in heaven. Peter says, on this journey through this world to eternity, to this inheritance, the Christian is protected by the power of God through faith.

The Love of God has made us his children, reborn through the loving kindness of God. This is the gift of Easter. To help us with this radical change (rebirth) that Easter calls forth, we are also gifted with the Holy Spirit...this too is the gift of Easter.

The spirit helps us to grow beyond doubt into personal faith, as we see in the case of Thomas in the Gospel of today.

May the Holy Spirit empower you to fulfill your mission in life.

John 20:19-31

The early Christians had new insights into all the things Jesus said and did while he was among them when they recognized that Jesus had risen from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus was an act of love by which God had transformed everyone and everything. This enabled them to understand the meaning of the cross and why Jesus had to die.

The resurrection of Jesus offered new possibilities of forgiveness, peace, faith, hope, love and all that is of God and from God. Even the reality of doubt has gained a new meaning and value. The reality of doubt began to be seen as an integral part of our journey of faith. Thomas stands out in today's Gospel as a source of encouragement for all believers. As a questioning person, Thomas moved from skepticism and disbelief to a firm and committed faith.

May the Holy Spirit bless and transform your disbelief and all your doubts and all your fears and empower you to respond to God's call in faithfulness and love!

Easter changed everything! Men and women experienced transformation of their lives. Frightened men became fearless proclaimers of the good news of Jesus and ministers of God's forgiving and healing presence among his people. Denials were turned to affirmations of love and dedicated service as in the case of Peter and doubts were changed to confession of faith as in the case of Thomas. Men who were hiding in fear were empowered to move freely and proclaim their joy in the risen Lord.

Easter did change everything! Transformation of people did happen! Be open to the transforming power of the resurrection of Jesus!

Saint of the Day, April 12 - St. Teresa of Los Andes and 11 other saints are remembered this day.

Juana Fernández Solar was born on July 13, 1900 in Santiago, Chile. She received her education in a college managed by French nuns from the Sacred Heart order. In 1914, she decided to consecrate herself to the Lord and become a Discalced Carmelite. On December 8, 1915, she made a vow to remain chaste and she renewed it on a regular basis.

On May 7, 1919 she entered the novitiate of the Discalced Carmelites in Los Andes, received the religious name "Teresa of Jesus" and the habit of the Carmelites. Toward the end of her short life the new nun began an apostolate of letter-writing in which she shared her thoughts on the spiritual life. But she soon contracted typhus that was diagnosed as fatal. However, some historians have suggested that she might have contracted Spanish flu, which was devastating Chile at this time. In any case, her condition grew worse on April 2, 1920 - Good Friday. She was still three months short of turning 20 and had six months to complete her canonical novitiate so as to make her religious vows. But she nevertheless was allowed to profess her vows "in danger of death" on April 7, 1920. She died on April 12, 1920, in Los Andes, Chile one week after Easter.

Known as the "Flower of the Andes," Teresa remains popular with the estimated 100,000 pilgrims who visit her shrine in Los Andes each year. Canonized in 1993 by Pope John Paul II, she is Chile's first saint.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs