

WORD FROM THE PASTOR

WE ARE THE BENEFICIARIES OF CHRIST RESURRECTION



My brothers and sisters in Christ, the word of God on this third Sunday of Easter brings testimonies regarding the resurrection of Jesus. We have that of the Apostle Peter. His life underwent a radical transformation. We recall his reaction when Jesus foretold His Passion, His death, and His resurrection; he could not bear the very idea. And when Jesus was arrested, Peter was so terrified for his own life that he denied being one of His followers. But on the day of Pentecost, everything changed: the Apostles received the Holy Spirit. From that moment on, Peter could bear witness with power and courage: **"This Jesus, Whom you put to death on the Cross, God has raised Him up."** His death was not a failure. He is alive forever; all of this had been foretold in the Scriptures in the writings of Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets. This Good News was proclaimed first to the Jewish people, and very shortly thereafter to the Gentiles. The whole world must know with Jesus, death does not have the final word; God's plan culminates in life.

We encounter this same call from Peter in the 2nd Reading: This Jesus, Who died and rose again, is the Savior of all mankind. **It was not gold or silver that redeemed us from the empty way of life inherited from our ancestors; rather, it is through the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ that we are purified; it was for our sake and for the sake of the multitude that He offered His life and shed His blood.** His love surpasses anything we could possibly imagine. We are invited to receive this letter as a call to true conversion.

In the Gospel reading, we are transported back to the third day following Jesus' death: two disciples were making their way back from Jerusalem. They had witnessed the Passion and death of their Master. To them, it seemed that everything had come to an end. It was the end of a great hope. Saint Luke notes that one of them was named Cleopas; he does not mention the name of the second. Yet, if we reread this Gospel within our own context, we can say that this second disciple is each one of us.

Indeed, we are often that disciple marked by sadness and discouragement. This is what happens when we view our daily lives as a defeat: the defeat of the Gospel for persecuted Christians, for the poor, the excluded, and the victims of violence, war, loneliness, and abandonment. This sense of defeat also arises when we tell ourselves that, given the point we have reached, no hope remains.

But then, on this road to Emmaus, Jesus draws near to His own and joins them. They do not recognize Him; their eyes are blinded by sadness and disappointment. That same Christ joins us on our own journeys. **When everything goes wrong, He is there. Yet, all too often, we fail to recognize Him because our minds are elsewhere. And yet, He is always there, ready to listen to us. We can cry out to Him with our suffering, our disappointment, and our sadness.** At the conclusion of this Mass, we will be sent forth to bear witness before the eyes of all to the faith that sustains us. We cannot be content to simply remain among fellow Christians, confined within the walls of the Church. **Our witness must reach out to all people, particularly those dwelling on the "peripheries."**

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