

## **Easter Vigil in the Holy Night**

***Gen 1:1–2:2; Ex 14:15–15:1; Ezek 36:16–28; Rom 6:3–11; Mt 28:1–10***

### **Introduction 1: “From Darkness to Galilee”**

A man once returned to the village where he had grown up. Life had not gone as he hoped—dreams collapsed, relationships fractured, hope seemed lost. One evening, he walked down to the small lake where, as a boy, he had learned to fish with his father. The water reflected the fading sky. The reeds swayed as they always had. And he remembered his father’s voice: “Don’t be afraid to start again.”

Nothing outwardly changed. His debts remained. His past was not undone. Yet something inside him shifted. Hope returned. Sometimes, to move forward, we must return to where it all began.

Many years later, a storm struck a small coastal town. The electricity failed. Trees were uprooted. Darkness blanketed everything. In one house, a grandmother lit a single candle

and placed it in the window. A neighbour saw it and lit her own. Soon, one by one, lights flickered along the street. The storm raged on, yet the darkness no longer felt absolute. One small flame had given courage to many.

Tonight, we began in darkness. We lit the Easter fire, then the Paschal Candle, and from it, our candles. Gradually, the light spread, revealing the beauty of the Church and the hope that comes from Christ. Like the man at the lake and the grandmother with the candle, we are reminded that Easter is not only about the past—it is about the present, the living Christ who meets us where we are, in our fears, in our grief, in the ordinary moments of life.

The angel tells the women at the tomb: “He is not here. He is risen. Go to Galilee. There you will see Him.” Galilee is where life began for them, where love first stirred, where faith was alive. And tonight, we are invited not only to return to our beginnings but to become Galilee for the world—to let the light of Christ shine through us, guiding others out of darkness and into hope.

**OR**

### **Introduction 2: “Returning to Galilee”**

A man once returned to the village where he had grown up, a place full of memories both joyful and painful. Life had not gone as he hoped—dreams collapsed, relationships broken, hopes shattered. One evening, he walked down to the old lake where, as a boy, he had learned to fish. The water reflected the fading sky. The reeds swayed as they always had. And he suddenly remembered his father’s voice: *“Don’t be afraid to start again.”*

Nothing outwardly changed, yet something inside him shifted. Hope returned. He realized that sometimes we must return to where it all began in order to move forward.

Tonight, the angel sends the women back to their Galilee—not just a place on a map, but the place of beginnings, of faith, of first love. *“Go to Galilee. There you will see Him.”*

Easter is not just about looking at an empty tomb—it is about finding the living Christ in the places and moments where life first stirred in our hearts.

**OR**

### **Introduction 3: “The Candle in the Storm”**

Many years ago, a small coastal town was struck by a violent storm. The electricity failed, trees were uprooted, and the whole town was plunged into darkness. In one house, a grandmother lit a single candle and placed it in the window. A neighbour saw it and lit her own candle. Soon, one by one, lights flickered along the street. The storm raged on, but the darkness no longer felt absolute. One small flame gave courage to many.

Tonight, we began in darkness. We lit the Easter fire. The Paschal Candle pierced the shadows, and the light spread from one candle to another. That light is Christ—shining not only in history, but in our hearts, in our homes, in the world around us. Just as the women at the tomb moved from grief to awe, we are invited to let this light transform our lives. The Risen Lord goes before us, lighting the way from despair to hope, from death to life, from the tomb into Galilee.

## Homily 1: Mt 28:1–10 – “Go to Galilee”

A man once returned to his childhood village after many years away. His life had collapsed—business failure, broken relationships, deep disappointment. He felt as though everything he had built had turned to dust in his hands. One evening, almost without knowing why, he walked down to the small lake where, as a boy, he had learned to fish with his father.

The place had not changed much. The water still reflected the evening sky. The reeds still moved with the wind. And standing there, he suddenly remembered his father’s voice: *“Don’t be afraid to try again.”*

Nothing outwardly changed in that moment. His debts did not disappear. His past did not undo itself. But something within him shifted. Hope returned. Later he would say, “Going back there saved my life.”

Tonight, the angel sends the women back—not geographically alone, but spiritually—to their “lake,” to their beginning. “Go to Galilee. There you will see Him.”

And in that simple instruction lies the whole mystery of Easter. Resurrection is not merely about what happened to Jesus. It is about where we must go to find Him alive again.

### The Road to the Grave

Two women—both named Mary—walk toward a tomb.

They carry spices.

They carry grief.

They carry shattered expectations.

The last thing they saw was a stone rolled into place.

They are walking the most familiar road in human history: the road to the grave.

We know that road.

We walk it when we stand beside a coffin.

We walk it when a relationship dies.

We walk it when a diagnosis changes everything.

We walk it when trust is betrayed.

We walk it when hope collapses.

We walk it when we watch violence, cruelty, and injustice fill our news and wonder whether goodness is strong enough to survive.

In a deeper sense, our whole earthly life can feel like a long road toward the grave—and one day others will carry us on the final stretch.

The women are not expecting resurrection. They are expecting decay. They are going to complete what death has begun.

And then—heaven interrupts.

An angel says something astonishing:

“You are on the wrong road. He is not here. He is risen.”

Imagine the shock. Imagine the disorientation. The place that was supposed to hold death is empty.

If you are looking for Jesus among the dead, you are looking in the wrong place.

Resurrection is not found in tombs of regret, bitterness, or despair. The living Christ is never located where hope is

sealed away. He is always ahead of us, always in motion, always drawing life out of what seems finished.

### Why Galilee?

Then comes the surprising instruction:

“Go to Galilee.”

Why Galilee?

Because Galilee was where everything began.

It was the place of calling: “Follow me.”

It was the place of first love.

It was the place where nets broke with abundance.

Where water blushed into wine.

Where five loaves fed thousands.

Where lepers were touched.

Where the paralytic walked.

Where the widow of Nain received back her son.

Where sinners wept and found mercy.

Where hearts burned during the Sermon on the Mount.

Where fishermen discovered they were apostles.

Galilee was messy, ordinary, rural, mixed with pagans and outsiders. It was not Jerusalem, not the centre of power. And yet that is precisely where the Kingdom became visible.

Galilee was where faith felt alive.

But then came Good Friday.

The One who healed hangs helpless.

The One who spoke with authority is silenced.

The One who saved others does not save Himself.

The One who raised the dead is laid in a tomb.

It looked as though Galilee had been a beautiful illusion—a soap bubble that burst at the cross.

Have we not had such moments?

Times when faith seemed luminous—only to be shattered by suffering?

Moments when prayer once felt alive but now feels empty?

When we wondered: *Was it all just emotion? Was it real?*

Easter is God's answer.

The resurrection is the Father placing His official seal on everything that happened in Galilee.

Nothing was illusion.

Nothing was wasted.

No tear was unnoticed.

No act of love was meaningless.

No prayer was unheard.

Love was not defeated.

The Crucified One lives.

**Where Is Your Galilee?**

And so the angel says to us tonight:

When you are walking toward the grave—turn around.

Go to Galilee.

But where is your Galilee?

Was there a moment when Scripture suddenly spoke directly into your life?

A confession that lifted a crushing weight?

A Eucharist where you sensed you were not alone?  
A dark hour when peace came inexplicably?  
A friendship through which Christ's kindness reached you?  
A quiet gesture of mercy that reminded you goodness still  
breathes?

That was your Galilee.

For some, Galilee was childhood faith.

For others, it was a retreat.

For others, the birth of a child.

For others, a hospital room where grace was stronger than  
fear.

And if tonight you say, "I have never had such a Galilee,"  
then borrow someone else's.

Go to someone whose faith is alive.

Listen to the testimony of a saint.

Read the story of someone whose hope survived suffering.

The Church herself is the great Galilee where generation  
after generation has encountered the living Christ.

Think of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Their feet  
were walking away from Jerusalem—but their hearts were  
remembering Galilee, remembering what they had seen  
and heard. And while they spoke of Him, He came and  
walked beside them.

Their hearts began to burn.

The Risen One is always found in Galilee—in the place  
where you first knew His love.

### Becoming Galilee

But Easter does not end with finding Galilee.

It calls us to become Galilee.

During World War II, a bomb destroyed a statue of Christ in  
a church. Only the torso remained. Later, when the parish  
rebuilt the church, they left the statue without hands.

Beneath it they placed a sign:

"Christ has no hands but yours."

The Risen Lord sends us now—not to remain in  
nostalgia—but to become Galilee for the world.

Places where:

Bread multiplies.

Empty nets fill again.

Water turns into wine.

Sinners find mercy.

The grieving are comforted.

The forgotten are seen.

Hope returns quietly but stubbornly.

Resurrection often does not arrive with thunder. It begins in small fidelities: A word of forgiveness.

An act of generosity.

A refusal to give up.

A choice to trust again.

A hand extended instead of withdrawn.

Every time we act in love, Galilee happens again.

Every time mercy triumphs over resentment, the stone rolls away.

Every time we choose hope over cynicism, the tomb is empty.

## Final Invitation

Do not remain on the road to the grave.

Do not build your home in disappointment.

Turn around.

Go back to where Christ first met you.

Go back to where love first awakened your heart.

Go back to Galilee.

And from there, go out and create Galilee for others.

For the angel's promise is still true:

"There you will see Him."

And once you have seen Him alive, you will never again mistake the tomb for the final word.

Amen.

## Homily 2 – “New Creation Has Begun”

A little boy once stood in front of a bookstore window gazing at a painting of the crucifixion. A man beside him asked, “Do you know who that is?”

“That’s Jesus,” the boy replied confidently. “They crucified Him. He died for all people.”

The man nodded thoughtfully and walked away. But after a few steps he heard hurried footsteps behind him. The boy came running, slightly out of breath:

“Mister! I forgot to tell you something—He is risen! He’s alive!”

There are messages that change everything. Without the second sentence, the first one would crush us. A crucified Savior without resurrection would be only tragedy. A cross without Easter would be defeat. But that second sentence—*He is risen*—turns despair into hope, endings into beginnings, death into life.

And that is the miracle of Easter: grief and death do not have the final word. Even when the world seems to collapse—through violence, war, betrayal, illness, or personal loss—life, love, and hope persist.

If Easter were only about a dead man returning to earthly life, it would not be entirely new. We have seen that before in the Gospel.

The daughter of Jairus—dead, and raised.

The widow’s son at Nain—carried out for burial, and called back.

Lazarus—four days in the tomb, and summoned forth.

But each of them returned to the same life as before. Their hearts beat again, their lungs breathed again—but they would age, suffer, and eventually die again.

That is not what happened to Jesus.

The resurrection of Jesus is not a reversal.

It is not resuscitation.

It is new creation.

Tonight, at the Vigil, we began with the first page of the Bible:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... and God saw that it was good.”

Creation began in goodness, harmony, light. But something happened between Genesis and Good Friday. Sin entered. Trust was broken. Brother killed brother. Violence spread. Creation groaned under the weight of human selfishness.

Saint Paul says, “All creation has been groaning in labour pains until now.”

And on Good Friday, it seemed the groaning reached its climax. The Son of God hangs on a cross. Darkness covers the earth. The curtain of the Temple is torn. It appears as though chaos has returned, as though the light of the first day has been extinguished.

But Easter morning is not merely a happy ending to a tragic story.

It is the beginning of an entirely new one.

The Gospel writers are careful to show us something mysterious. The risen Jesus is the same—and yet not the same.

He bears the wounds. The scars are not erased; they are glorified.

He eats fish with His disciples. He speaks with them.

But He also passes through locked doors.

He appears and disappears.

He is recognized only when He calls Mary by name, or when He breaks the bread.

It is continuity and transformation together.

This is not the old creation repaired.

This is the first day of the new creation.

Saint John even hints at this deliberately: Jesus rises “on the first day of the week.” The same day on which, in Genesis, God said, “Let there be light.” Easter is the new “Let there be light.” The darkness of sin and death is pierced from within.

Saint Paul struggles for language to describe this. He calls it a “spiritual body.” Not ghostly. Not less real. But more real. Matter penetrated by glory. Humanity filled with divine life.

The prophets had long dreamed of such a day:

“They shall beat their swords into ploughshares.”

“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb.”

“A little child shall lead them.”

These are not naïve fantasies. They are images of healed creation—*shalom*—wholeness restored. And that restoration begins in the body of the Risen Christ.

Where Adam once failed in a garden, Christ rises in a garden. Where death entered through disobedience, life bursts forth through obedience and love.

Let me tell you a small story.

After a devastating wildfire, a farmer walked through his charred fields. Everything seemed destroyed. Blackened trees. Burned soil. Silence.

It looked hopeless.

But days later, he noticed tiny green shoots pushing through the ashes. Fire had not had the final word. Beneath the surface, life had been waiting.

Good Friday was the fire.

Easter morning is the green shoot.

But here is the astonishing part: this new creation did not stop with Jesus.

Look at the apostles.

On Friday, they are hiding.

On Sunday evening, they are still behind locked doors, afraid.

Peter carries shame. Thomas carries doubt. The others carry confusion.

But weeks later, they stand in the streets proclaiming boldly: “God has raised Him!”

What changed them?

They encountered the Risen One.

Not an idea. Not a memory. A living Person.

The mark of the early Christians was not political power or military strength. It was something the pagan world found astonishing. People said in amazement, “See how they love one another.”

They cared for the sick during plagues when others fled.

They rescued abandoned infants.

They forgave their persecutors.

That is not natural. It is supernatural.

It is resurrection power.

When Saint Francis of Assisi embraced the leper, he once feared, that was new creation breaking through fear.

When Maximilian Kolbe offered his life in Auschwitz for a fellow prisoner, that was new creation shining in the darkest camp.

When a husband forgives betrayal instead of seeking revenge, that is new creation.

When a woman chooses life and hope in the midst of difficulty, that is new creation.

When volunteers comfort children fleeing war, when strangers open their homes to refugees, when reconciliation replaces hatred—that is Easter continuing.

The world often speaks of a “culture of death.” We see it in violence, addiction, exploitation, indifference. But Christians are not merely called to condemn darkness. We are called to radiate something different.

Saint Paul says: “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.”

Not *will be* someday. But is.

Through baptism we were plunged into Christ’s death—and raised with Him. The power that burst open the tomb now lives in us. The Holy Spirit is the breath of the new creation already breathing within the Church.

Easter is not only our future hope.

It is a present power.

It is strength to forgive when it seems impossible.

It is courage to stand for truth when it costs us.

It is hope when grief feels overwhelming.

It is light when our personal world feels dark.

The tomb is empty—but more importantly, the world is no longer empty of God’s transforming presence.

A small child once planted seeds in early spring. The ground was still cold, and his older brother laughed: “Nothing will grow in that.”

But the child returned every day to water the soil.

He did not see anything happening. The earth looked the same.

But weeks later, green shoots appeared.

“How did you know?” the older brother asked.

“I didn’t see it,” the child replied, “but I knew life was there.”

Brothers and sisters, sometimes our world still looks like Good Friday. Sometimes our hearts still feel like sealed tombs. Sometimes we see more ashes than green shoots.

But Easter tells us: life is already at work beneath the surface.

Tonight we celebrate the day when life broke through the cold soil of the grave.

The new creation has begun. Christ is the first fruit. The garden has reopened. The light has returned.

And if we remain in Him—if we pray, forgive, love, persevere—that resurrection life will push through us into a wounded world.

He is risen. He is truly risen. Amen.

### Homily 3 - From Darkness to Galilee: Walking into the Light of the Risen Lord”

Many years ago, a small coastal town was struck by a violent storm. The electricity failed, trees were uprooted, and the whole town was plunged into darkness. In one house, a grandmother lit a single candle and placed it in the front window. A neighbour saw it and lit her own candle. Soon, one by one, lights began to flicker in the windows along the street. The storm had not yet passed. The wind was still howling. But the darkness no longer felt absolute. One small flame had given courage to others. And in that fragile but stubborn light, hope returned.

Tonight, we began in darkness.

There is something deeply dramatic about this night. We gathered outside, we struggled with flame and wind, we lit the Easter fire, and from it the Paschal Candle. Then we entered a darkened church with only that single flame to guide us. Gradually, the light spread from one candle to another until the darkness gave way to a soft, living glow.

In that light, we sang the Exsultet — that great proclamation calling heaven and earth to rejoice, announcing that “darkness vanishes forever” and praising Christ, the Morning Star who has risen and shed his peaceful light on all humanity.

This drama is not theatre. It is truth enacted. It is the story of our salvation told not only with words, but with fire, movement, and light. We celebrate tonight the most dramatic event in human history: God raising his Son from the dead. Jesus, brutally crucified and shamefully executed, is wonderfully and gloriously raised by the Father. The stone is rolled back. The tomb is empty. Death is defeated.

Matthew’s Gospel captures the drama vividly. He tells us there was a violent earthquake. An angel descended, his appearance like lightning, his robe white as snow. The earth trembles. Heaven intervenes. These are not decorative details; they are biblical signs that God himself is acting. History has reached its turning point.

And yet, at the centre of this cosmic drama are two grieving women making a very human walk.

Many of us know that kind of walk. The walk to a hospital bedside. The walk to a neighbour's house after hearing bad news. The walk behind a coffin. Such walks are heavy. They drain us. Mary of Magdala and the other Mary walked to the tomb with that same heaviness. They had followed Jesus in Galilee. They had stood at a distance as he died. They had seen his body laid in the tomb. Now they walked simply to be near him, even in death. Love would not let them stay away.

They expected silence. They expected stillness. They expected to pray for the dead.

Instead, the earth shook.

The tomb was empty.

And the angel said the words that echo through the centuries: "Jesus who was crucified... is not here. He has risen."

Between their sad walk to the tomb and their joyful running from it stands that announcement. The Gospel tells us they left "filled with awe and great joy" and ran to tell the disciples. Grief turned into mission. Mourning turned into proclamation.

We see something similar even in ordinary life. I once heard of a doctor who had to tell a family that a loved one would recover after days of uncertainty. The same corridor that had felt like a tunnel of dread suddenly became a pathway of relief and gratitude. Nothing about the building changed — but everything had changed. News can transform a walk.

The news of Easter transforms not just a corridor, not just a morning, but the whole of human history.

And yet, the angel gives a surprising instruction: "He is going before you to Galilee; it is there you will see him." Jesus himself repeats it: "Tell my brothers to go to Galilee; they will see me there."

Why Galilee?

Galilee was where it all began. It was where Jesus healed the sick, forgave sinners, touched lepers, welcomed the excluded, fed the hungry, and gathered a community. Galilee was the place of everyday life — fishing boats, village homes, dusty roads. The risen Lord sends them not to a shrine, not to a monument, not to remain gazing into an empty tomb — but back to the place of life and mission.

If he is not in the tomb, where is he?

He is to be found where life is restored.

Where mercy triumphs over judgment.

Where dignity is defended.

Where the lonely are visited.

Where forgiveness is offered.

Where hope is rekindled.

In other words, he is found wherever his Spirit is at work.

Where is Galilee for us today? It is wherever we live our ordinary lives. It is our homes, our workplaces, our parish, our streets. If we are looking for the living among the dead — among past failures, regrets, and fears — we will not

find him there. If we seek the living Lord in places of life, charity, courage, and compassion, we will.

The first words spoken at the empty tomb are striking: “Do not be afraid.”

The first words of the risen Jesus: “Do not be afraid.”

The crucifixion had generated fear. The disciples were broken, ashamed, confused — a spent force. And yet the risen Lord met them exactly there. He did not wait for them to become strong. He met them in their weakness.

He does the same with us.

Some of us come tonight carrying darkness: the loss of someone we love, anxiety about the future, disappointment, discouragement, private struggles no one else sees. We live in a world that often feels overshadowed by greed, violence, uncertainty. It is easy to feel that darkness has the upper hand.

But tonight declares: darkness is not ultimate.

As Saint John writes, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”

I remember once standing in complete darkness on a remote island, far from city lights. It was unsettling. I felt small and vulnerable. But then, slowly, my eyes adjusted. And above me appeared a sky ablaze with stars I had never seen before. The darkness had not disappeared — but it had become the backdrop for a greater light.

Easter does not pretend that darkness does not exist. It proclaims that darkness does not win.

The women moved from sadness to joy, from joy to worship — they fell at his feet — and from worship to mission. That is our journey tonight. We entered in darkness. We received the light. We listened to the story of salvation. We renew our baptismal promises. We worship the risen Lord. And then we are sent.

Easter is not only about life after death. It is about life before death. We are called to be an Easter people — people who create “modern-day Galilees,” spaces where

Christ’s life becomes visible. The feast calls forth courage. The courage to forgive. The courage to stand for truth. The courage to defend life. The courage to hope when hope seems unreasonable.

Perhaps the gift we most need tonight is that courage.

Let me end with another story.

After the storm in that coastal town, when power was finally restored, someone asked the grandmother why she had put the candle in the window. She replied, “I didn’t light it to chase away the whole storm. I lit it so no one would think they were alone.”

That is what God has done in the resurrection of Jesus.

He has not removed every storm from our lives. But he has lit a light that tells us we are not alone. The tomb is empty. Christ is risen. He goes ahead of us into our Galilee. And wherever we carry his light — however small our flame may seem — darkness will never have the last word.

Christ is risen. He is truly risen. Alleluia.

## Homily 4 – “From the Tomb into the Light”

In Goethe’s *Faust*, the scholar Faust stands in despair. Knowledge has not satisfied him. Success has not fulfilled him. In defiance of life’s emptiness, he lifts a vial of poison to his lips.

Then—Easter bells ring in the distance.

The sound awakens childhood memories. Something softens. The glass lowers from his hand. He steps outside. People flood into the sunlight. And Faust says:

“They celebrate the Lord’s Resurrection, for they themselves have risen.”

Something within him rises too.

Tonight’s Gospel begins in darkness.

“While it was still dark,” Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb.

Easter faith does not begin in triumph. It begins in darkness, confusion, grief.

Mary sees the stone removed—but assumes the worst.  
“They have taken the Lord.”

Peter sees the linen cloths—but does not yet understand.  
The beloved disciple enters, sees—and believes.

Love sees more deeply than fear.

The resurrection is not proven like a mathematical formula.  
It is recognized by a heart that loves.

Then comes one of the most tender scenes in all Scripture.

Mary stands weeping. She mistakes Jesus for the gardener.

In one sense, she is wrong.

In another sense, she is profoundly right.

The Bible began in a garden. Humanity fell in a garden.  
And now, in a garden, the new Adam stands—the Gardener of the new creation.

He speaks one word:

“Mary.”

He calls her by name.

And everything changes.

Let me tell you another story.

A teacher once told her students, “When someone calls your name, it means you matter.” Years later, one of her former pupils—who had struggled deeply in life—said, “The first time I believed I was worth something was when someone spoke my name with kindness.”

Easter is God speaking our name.

Not in general.

Not abstractly.

Personally.

“Mary.”

“Thomas.”

“Peter.”

And tonight—your name.

The resurrection is not merely an event in history. It is an encounter.

The women in Matthew’s Gospel run from the tomb “with fear and great joy.” That mixture is very real. Easter does not erase the wounds. Jesus still bears them.

The cross seemed to erase Galilee.

The crucifixion seemed to silence His words.

The stone seemed final.

Have you ever felt such finality? A diagnosis. A broken relationship. A dream collapsing. A sin that seems unforgivable.

Stones get rolled into place in our lives too.

But Easter declares: the stone is not the final word.

The disciples hide behind locked doors. And yet the Risen One enters. Locked doors do not stop Him.

And notice: He does not scold them. He says, “Peace be with you.”

Resurrection does not begin with accusation. It begins with peace.

Consider one more image.

A prison chaplain once described baptizing an inmate serving a long sentence. “The cell door still locked behind him,” the chaplain said, “but something had changed. He walked back differently. The walls were the same—but he was free.”

That is Easter.

Circumstances may not immediately change.

But the heart changes.

Hope returns.

Freedom begins within.

Saint Paul writes: “If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above.” Not escape from the world—but a new way of living within it.

When forgiveness replaces revenge—that is resurrection.

When courage replaces fear—that is resurrection.

When hope stands in the face of death—that is resurrection.

Closing Story

An elderly woman stood at her husband’s grave. Someone asked her gently, “How can you be so calm?”

She smiled and said, “Because I know how the story ends.”

Brothers and sisters, tonight we know how the story ends.

The darkness does not win.

The stone does not remain.

The grave is not ultimate.

The Gardener stands in the garden of the world and calls us by name.

And when He calls us, we rise.

Christ is risen.

He is truly risen. Amen.

## Easter Sunday (Mass during the Day)

*Acts 10,34. 37-43; Col 3,1-4 or 1 Cor 5,6-8; Jn 20,1-9*

### INTRODUCTION 1

Easter sets people in motion. The roads are full of cars with people using the holidays for outings or Easter vacations. Already on that first Easter morning, people were on the move. Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb; Peter and John run there. But they also walk an inner path—from doubt to faith, from the sorrow of Good Friday to the joy of Easter.

Let us be touched by the hope that radiates from Easter. Let us walk this path with them, now in this celebration, in which we hear the Good News of the Resurrection and celebrate the meal in which the Risen One lives among us.

**OR**

### INTRODUCTION 2

A man once told me that after losing his job, he avoided opening his mailbox. Each day he walked past it, fearing

more disappointment, more proof that everything was falling apart. One morning, almost unwillingly, he opened it. Inside was not another bill, but a simple handwritten note from a friend: *“I believe in you. Don’t give up.”*

He said later, “Nothing outside had changed yet. But something inside me shifted. It felt as if a stone had been rolled away.”

Easter begins in much the same way.

Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb carrying grief. Peter and John run with confusion and unanswered questions. They expect finality. They expect silence. Instead, they encounter an emptiness that is full of promise. The stone is rolled away. The tomb is empty. And slowly, within their fearful hearts, resurrection begins.

Easter is not only about what happened to Jesus long ago. It is about what happens when Christ calls our name, when hope rises behind the clouds of doubt, when forgiveness loosens what has been tightly clenched within us. As Saint Paul tells us: *“You have been raised with Christ.”*

Today we do not simply remember resurrection—we open ourselves to it. Let us allow the Risen Lord to move us from fear to trust, from sorrow to hope, from standing still to running toward new life.

### **PENITENTIAL ACT**

Though Christ is risen, we sometimes remain standing at closed tombs, holding onto fear, resentment, or doubt. Let us ask the Risen Lord to roll away the stones of our hearts.

- Lord Jesus, you call us by name and awaken faith within us: **Lord, have mercy.**
- Christ Jesus, you free us from the power of sin and open for us the way to new life: **Christ, have mercy.**
- Lord Jesus, you send us forth as witnesses of hope in a wounded world: **Lord, have mercy.**

### **PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION**

May almighty and merciful God,  
who rolled away the stone from the tomb of his Son,  
roll away the stones that burden our hearts.

May he free us from the grip of fear and doubt,  
loosen the chains of resentment and sin,  
and call each of us by name into newness of life.

Having died with Christ in Baptism,  
may we also rise with him in faith, hope, and love,  
and be brought to everlasting life. **Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO THE GLORIA**

On this holy day, heaven and earth rejoice.

The silence of the tomb has been broken; the light of Christ has conquered the night.

With the angels and with the whole Church throughout the world, let us lift our voices in praise and sing:

**Glory to God in the highest!**

### **OPENING PRAYER**

O God of everlasting life,  
who on this day through your Only Begotten Son  
have conquered death  
and unlocked for us the path to eternity,  
grant, we pray,

that we who celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord  
may be inwardly renewed by your Spirit,  
so that, raised with Christ,  
we may seek the things that are above  
and walk in the newness of life.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## **HOMILY 1 – “YOU HAVE BEEN RAISED WITH CHRIST”**

### *Colossians 3:1–4*

When I was a child, my grandmother had a tradition every Easter morning. Before breakfast, she would take me to a small hill behind our house. From there, we could see the sun rising over the fields. One year, the sky was grey, the wind cold, and I complained that it looked nothing like the bright Easter pictures in the books. My grandmother smiled and said, “Sometimes, you have to look closely. The sun is rising even behind the clouds. You just have to open your

eyes.” That day, I realized that Easter is not just about what we see; it is about what we experience in our hearts.

At the beginning of the reading from his Letter to the Colossians, the Apostle Paul writes something remarkable: “You have been raised with Christ.” Notice that he does not say, “You will one day be raised.” No, he says, you have been raised.

This is a bold statement. Has our resurrection already taken place? Paul’s answer is a resounding yes. But how can we know? He would tell the story of his own conversion: once a persecutor of Christians, he was struck down by a blinding light on the road to Damascus. When Ananias laid hands on him, he became a new man. His resurrection had already happened—not in a distant future, but in a real, personal encounter with Christ.

We, too, are invited into this resurrection. Yesterday, at the Easter Vigil, we heard Ezekiel’s promise: “I will give you a new heart. I will remove the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” It is not our doing alone; God transforms us.

That is the mystery of Easter—our hearts can be renewed, our lives made new.

Let me share an experience from 1975, when I was a young curate in Recklinghausen. I led a retreat for the Young Christian Workers. Among the twenty young men, there was one named Werner, whose only goal seemed to be to spoil the retreat. He brought alcohol, distracted the others, and refused to participate. On Good Friday afternoon, we sat on the floor around a single candle. I read the parable of the Prodigal Son and invited them to speak to God in their own words.

At first, Werner resisted. But then, one of his friends began to pray aloud: “Jesus, let Werner experience this too—how beautiful it is to be allowed to speak to you.” Something changed. Werner began to cry, to open his clenched fists, and slowly, he prayed for the first time in his life. By midnight, many of the boys had stayed in the chapel all night, praying, reading, or sitting in silence. They had experienced Easter—Jesus alive in their midst.

On Easter morning, Werner approached the central candle, lit his own, and spoke. For fifteen minutes, he shared his heart, his transformation. And then, he gave his candle to his friend: “If you hadn’t prayed for me, I would never have realized that Jesus is alive.” That is resurrection: when hearts are transformed, darkness becomes light, sorrow becomes joy, bitterness becomes peace.

Resurrection is not just a story from the past; it is alive today. It happens in moments of forgiveness, in acts of kindness, in the courage to pray even when it feels awkward or impossible. Each encounter with the Risen One transforms us. Each act of love and mercy is a sign of the new life Christ offers.

Anecdotes in Between:

I remember a woman at a retreat who had lost all hope after a devastating illness. She told me she couldn’t pray anymore; her heart was too heavy. Yet, in small steps, during the retreat, she began to pray aloud in fragments. By the end, her face shone with a peace she hadn’t known

in years. Resurrection is happening when God's life reaches into our pain.

Another story: a man in my parish had carried anger for decades toward a family member. One Easter morning, he called them, simply to say, "I forgive you." That call transformed both their lives. The resurrection is always personal, always intimate, always a gift.

I think back to that hill behind my grandmother's house. That gray morning taught me something essential about Easter: even when the world seems dim, the light of Christ rises. Like Werner, like the woman at the retreat, like the man who forgave, we can experience Easter now—not just in a feast, but in the transformation of our hearts.

So today, as we celebrate, I do not merely wish you a happy Easter. I wish that you may encounter the Risen Christ, that he may meet you personally, and that your heart may be renewed. Then, just as Paul wrote to the Colossians, he could write about each of us: "You have been raised with Christ." Amen.

## HOMILY 2 – "WHEN THE STONE IS ROLLED AWAY"

A few years ago, after a devastating earthquake, rescue workers were combing through the ruins of a collapsed building. For hours there had been only silence. Most had already assumed that no one could have survived. Then one rescuer thought he heard something—very faint. He stopped the machines. Everyone became still. Beneath the concrete and dust came the weak sound of a child crying.

That tiny sound changed everything. What seemed like a place of death suddenly became a place of hope. The rescuers worked with renewed strength. And hours later, a little girl was carried out alive.

All it took was one sign of life to set everything in motion.

Easter begins just as quietly. No trumpet blast. No earthquake that the whole city noticed. No public spectacle. The Resurrection happened in the night. If no one had gone to the tomb, no one would have noticed.

What would have happened if Mary Magdalene had stayed home? If Peter and John had said, "It's over. Let's return to

our fishing nets”? The Resurrection would still have happened—but it would not have been discovered.

Resurrection sets people in motion.

Mary is driven by love and longing. Peter and the beloved disciple run in what feels like a race against time. They want to know: Is what the women are saying nonsense—or is something truly new happening?

How often life feels like that—a race against time.

You arrive at the station just as the train pulls away.

You reach the hospital just after a loved one has taken their last breath.

You realize too late that a friendship has grown cold.

And sometimes we think: We have lost. It is too late. The race is over.

Peter arrives at the tomb and sees the linen cloths. He observes carefully. He analyses. But it is simply stated of the other disciple: He saw and believed.

What was the difference?

Not sharper eyesight.

Not better reasoning.

He saw with loving eyes.

The Resurrection cannot be calculated. It cannot be grasped like an object. It can only be perceived with a heart that has known grief, longing, and love.

Mary Magdalene stands weeping outside the tomb. She believes everything is finished. And then one word changes everything: “Mary.”

Imagine that moment. The way only one voice can say your name in a certain way. Perhaps you know that experience: a mother calling her child; a lifelong friend speaking your name; someone who truly sees you.

When Jesus speaks her name, her inner tomb opens. Her paralysis breaks. Resurrection happens first inside her.

That is important: Resurrection is not first a spectacle outside of us. It is an awakening within us.

Three very different people—Mary, Peter, John—each come to faith differently. There is no single royal road to Easter faith. God reaches each heart in a different way.

I once visited an elderly man in a nursing home. He had lost his wife of sixty years. “It’s empty now,” he said. “The house, the chair beside mine, the mornings.” But then he added quietly, “Yet when my granddaughter visits and laughs in the kitchen, something in me comes alive again.”

That, too, is a trace of Resurrection. Not denial of grief. But life breaking through grief.

Easter tells us: The stone is rolled away. Death does not have the final word. But strangely, instead of overwhelming joy, the first reaction in the Gospel is confusion, doubt, even fear.

And is that not true for us as well?

We still fear death.

We still carry guilt.

We still retreat into security and self-protection.

Yet Easter declares: The burden of guilt is lifted. If God raises the Crucified—who seemed cursed and defeated—then sin and failure are not the last truth about us.

Forgiveness is.

And yet how often do we prefer scapegoats? How often do we hold on to grievances? Easter invites us to let something old die—our resentment, our pride, our need to be right—so that something new may live.

Resurrection always involves a dying first. And dying is painful.

A woman once told me about forgiving her estranged sister after twenty years of silence. “It felt like something in me had to die first,” she said. “My anger, my sense of justice. But when I let it go, I felt lighter—as if a stone had been rolled away.”

That is Easter power.

Resurrection remains quiet. It does not force itself. It happens wherever:

- an elderly person is cared for with patience and love;
- children are allowed to be children, free from fear;
- people share bread and burdens together;
- someone chooses hope over cynicism.

Jesus lives wherever people dare to step out of fear into trust.

The Gospel tells us that the women were the first messengers. In a world where their testimony counted for little, God entrusted them with the greatest news in history. How different the world might be if we truly believed that God chooses the overlooked, the underestimated, the dismissed.

Is everything different because of Easter? Honestly, not yet. Wars continue. Cemeteries fill. Doubt persists.

And yet one thing is irreversibly different: The tomb is empty.

The impossible became reality. Buried hopes were raised. And that quiet event in the night continues to ripple through history.

But here is the question that remains for us: Does what we celebrate today have consequences? Or do we return unchanged to our routines?

Mary did not stay at the tomb. She went and told the others.

Peter and John did not remain in analysis. They began a journey that would carry them to the ends of the earth.

Resurrection pushes outward. It refuses to remain private comfort. It becomes visible wherever we protect life, foster justice, forgive generously, and create space for God in our hearts.

Otherwise, as one theologian once said, we would merely be caretakers of an empty tomb.

Let me end with another story.

During the Second World War, a small village church was destroyed. After the war, the villagers rebuilt it. Among the rubble they found a damaged statue of Christ. The hands had been completely broken off. Some wanted to replace it

with a new statue. But finally, they decided to keep it as it was. And beneath it they placed a simple inscription:

“Christ has no hands but ours.”

The statue still stands—without hands. But perhaps that is Easter’s final message.

The stone is rolled away.

The tomb is empty.

Christ is risen.

And now he lives—in us.

So the last question is this:

When will we set out toward life?

Amen.

### **HOMILY 3: “RUNNING TO THE EMPTY TOMB”**

A few years ago, a young woman shared with me a story from her own life. She had lost someone very dear to her and, in the weeks after, she would often walk through the cemetery near her home, seeking a sense of closeness to the person she had loved. One morning, she told me, she arrived at the grave expecting the familiar sorrow to wash over her, yet she found something entirely unexpected: a small group of strangers had gathered there, placing flowers, praying, and sharing memories. In that moment, she felt a surprising and profound comfort, a gentle reminder that life and love have ways of continuing even when loss seems final. This, I think, captures something of the wonder of Easter.

On that first Easter morning, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb of Jesus with grief heavy in her heart. She had stood at the foot of the cross, and now she came to mourn and care for his body. She expected only sorrow, only the harsh reality of death. Yet what she found was entirely unexpected: the stone was rolled away, and the tomb was

empty. Initially, her mind raced with possibilities—perhaps grave robbers had stolen the body, she thought. But then came something even more astonishing. In her excitement, she ran to Simon Peter and the beloved disciple, shouting, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have laid him!”

We can almost see them running, can’t we? Running out of confusion, out of urgency, out of wonder. The beloved disciple outran Peter, and when he looked into the tomb, “he saw and believed.” The empty tomb was not a sign of loss; it was the first sign of resurrection. The crucified one had become the risen one, the tomb of death had become the womb of new life.

I remember speaking to a group of young people a few months ago about surprises in life. One said, “Sometimes I expect the worst, and the worst doesn’t happen—it’s even better than I imagined.” That sense of being pleasantly surprised is at the heart of Easter. Mary Magdalene expected sorrow; she found joy. The disciples expected

despair; they were transformed into joyful proclaimers of the gospel.

The resurrection is not just a historical event to marvel at—it is a living reality that continues to touch us today. We each have our own Calvaries: experiences of rejection, betrayal, illness, isolation, or loss. Yet Easter tells us that God works to bring new life out of our suffering, just as God brought new life from the tomb. One of my friends, a nurse, shared how during the recent pandemic she felt overwhelmed and defeated by death and suffering. Yet, in small acts of care, in a smile, in a reassuring hand, she saw glimpses of life being renewed. Easter is always at work in those small, hopeful moments.

The resurrection also invites us into transformation. Jesus, raised from the dead, was transformed in body and spirit. The disciples, once despondent and fearful, were transformed into courageous witnesses. On the road to Emmaus, two disciples walked with heavy hearts, “faces downcast.” Only when Jesus joined them, spoke with them, and broke bread with them, were they transformed.

Life's difficulties had dimmed their hope, but encountering the risen Lord renewed their hearts. We, too, can experience such transformation in our lives, as the Lord meets us in prayer, in the Eucharist, and in one another.

Easter is also a feast of God's faithfulness. When Jesus died, it may have seemed as though God's love was absent, yet the resurrection proves otherwise. Paul reminds us that nothing—not even death—can separate us from the love of God. Think of Glasnevin cemetery, with its watchtowers built to guard against grave robbers. Mary Magdalene initially feared the worst, assuming someone had stolen the body of Jesus. How often do we, too, assume the worst in life, imagining God has abandoned us? Yet Easter proclaims otherwise: the stone is rolled away, the tomb is empty, and God's love is active and alive, even when we cannot yet see it.

And so, like Mary Magdalene, we are called to run—not in fear or despair, but in joy and hope. We are called to bear witness to God's transformative love in our families, our communities, and our world. The resurrection assures us

that death does not have the final word; suffering is not the last act. The Lord is for us, here and now, and beyond this life, into the fullness of eternal life.

I am reminded of a small village I visited once, where a farmer told me about his late wife. After her death, he would often wander through the fields, expecting only silence and emptiness. One day, he noticed new shoots springing up among the soil she had tended so lovingly. He laughed through his tears, saying, "Even in death, life finds a way." That, in essence, is the Easter story: life triumphing, love enduring, transformation happening beyond our expectations.

So, let us run to the empty tomb of our own lives with Mary Magdalene, open to the surprises God has in store. Let us allow the risen Lord to meet us, transform us, and send us forth as witnesses of Easter joy. And let us remember, as Paul reminds us, that what God has prepared surpasses anything our eyes have seen, our ears have heard, or our hearts have imagined. May our hearts be filled with the hope and joy of Easter, today and always. Amen.

## **INVITATION TO THE CREDO**

We proclaim our faith today, not as a distant memory, but as a living encounter with the Risen One.

We believe in the God of life, in Jesus, who walked the path from the cross to resurrection, and in the Spirit who empowers us to share this Easter joy with the world.

Let us confess together our faith in the One who gives new life and hope.

### **ALTERNATIVE CREED (for personal meditation only)**

I believe in God, who is Love,  
the Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus, his Word made flesh,  
the Messiah of the distressed and oppressed,  
who proclaimed the Kingdom of God and was crucified,  
therefore delivered up—like us—to the destruction of  
death, but on the third day rose again  
to continue working for our liberation  
until God will be all in all.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
who makes us co-workers of the Risen One,

brothers and sisters of those  
who struggle and suffer for justice.

I believe in the communion of the worldwide Catholic Church, in the forgiveness of sins, in peace on earth—for which it is worthwhile to work—and in the fulfillment of life beyond our earthly life. Amen.

## **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

As Mary ran to the disciples and as Peter and John ran to the tomb, let us now come forward with these gifts of bread and wine, signs of our lives and our labour, trusting that the Risen Lord will transform them—and us. Let us now pray that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God the Father almighty.

## **PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS**

Ever loving Father, we have brought bread and wine to the altar, earthly fruits, gifts of your good creation, refined through the work of human hands. At your word, Jesus comes to us in the forms of bread and wine. Thus, he is for

us the Bread of Life and the Wine of Joy. Thus, the Risen One draws tangibly near to us.

Let us feel how the sharing of bread and wine creates communion, removes distress and oppression, and gives life that no death can ever take away. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### **PREFACE (Easter Preface)**

It is truly right and just,  
our duty and our salvation,  
at all times to acclaim you, O Lord,  
but on this day above all  
to praise you yet more gloriously  
when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed.

For he is the One who was rejected and crucified,  
yet by your power was raised to life.  
He entered the silence of the tomb  
and returned victorious,  
rolling away the stone of despair  
and opening for us the gates of hope.

In him sorrow is transformed into joy,  
darkness yields to light,  
and death gives way to unending life.

Therefore, overcome with Paschal gladness,  
every land, every people exults in your praise,  
and even the heavenly powers, with the angelic hosts,  
sing together the unending hymn of your glory:

**Holy, Holy, Holy...**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE LORD'S PRAYER**

On the first Easter morning, confusion slowly turned into trust, and fear gave way to faith.

We too stand before the mystery of an empty tomb.  
Trusting that we have been raised with Christ,  
and confident that the Father always hears the prayer of his children,  
let us pray together in the words our Saviour gave us:

## EMBOLISM

Roll away, we pray, O Lord,  
the stones that confine our hearts—  
stones of fear, bitterness, and doubt—  
that, raised with your Son,  
we may live in the freedom of Easter faith  
and bear witness to his life in the world.  
Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,  
and graciously grant peace in our days,  
that, by the help of your mercy,  
we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress,  
as we await the blessed hope  
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

## PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,  
Risen from the tomb and standing among your disciples,  
you spoke a word that calmed their fear: *“Peace be with  
you.”*  
Look upon us, who still struggle with doubt, division, and  
wounded memories. Look not on our sins, but on the faith

you have planted in your Church.  
Where hearts are closed, roll away the stone.  
Where relationships lie buried in silence, bring new life.  
Where anxiety and uncertainty overshadow hope,  
let the light of your resurrection dawn.  
Graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with  
your will. Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Risen Lord,  
behold him who has conquered death  
and calls us to share in his life.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God of life,  
in this holy Sacrament  
you have given us a share in the victory of your Son.  
As the disciples encountered the empty tomb  
and slowly came to believe,

so may this Eucharist deepen our faith  
that we have been raised with Christ.

Let the Bread of Life strengthen us  
to forgive where it is difficult,  
to hope where it seems unreasonable,  
and to love where fear once held us back.

May the resurrection begin anew within us each day,  
until we share fully in the glory  
of him who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

### **SOLEMN EASTER BLESSING**

May God, who has brought life out of death, joy out of  
sorrow, and hope out of despair, fill your hearts with the  
radiance of the Risen Christ.

May the love of the Father, the power of the Son, and the  
guidance of the Holy Spirit transform every shadow in your  
life into light, every fear into courage, and every sorrow into  
joy.

And may the blessing of Almighty God, + the Father, + the  
Son, and + the Holy Spirit, come upon you and remain with  
you forever.

**Amen.**

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in the peace of the Risen Lord, carrying the joy of  
Easter into every corner of your life.

Go to bring hope to the weary, light to the sorrowful,  
and love to all whom you meet.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**Thanks be to God! Alleluia!**

### **TAKE-HOME THOUGHT**

The tomb is empty—but the story is not finished.

This week, notice where a stone needs to be rolled away in  
your life:

a conversation to begin, a forgiveness to offer, a hope to  
reclaim.

Resurrection is not only something we celebrate.  
It is something we live.

## Monday in the Easter Octave

*Acts 2,14. 22-33; Mt 28,8-15*

### INTRODUCTION

I once heard of a small boy who, very early on Easter morning, quietly followed the parish bell ringer up the narrow steps of the church tower. He had never been up there before. In the darkness before dawn, he expected only to hear the loud clanging of metal. But when the bells began to ring out over the sleeping town, something unexpected stirred in him. It was more than sound — it was a feeling of warmth and excitement, as though the whole world was waking up to good news. Years later he said, “That was the first time I understood that Easter wasn’t just something we talked about — it was something alive.”

That, in a small way, mirrors the experience of the women in today’s Gospel. They went to the tomb expecting to mourn. Instead, they encountered the risen Lord. Saint Matthew tells us they were filled with “awe and great joy.” Awe — because God had acted in a way beyond all

expectation. Joy — because death did not have the final word.

Yet alongside that joy, the Gospel also shows resistance and falsehood. While the women proclaim life, others try to suppress the truth. From the very beginning, the resurrection required witnesses — people willing to stand in the light of what God has done.

Today, we gather not simply to remember an event long past, but to encounter the living Christ. We come with our own burdens, doubts, and fears. And into all of that, Easter speaks: life triumphs over death, love over hatred, hope over despair. May the same awe and joy that filled the women at the tomb fill our hearts this morning.

### PENITENTIAL ACT

Lord Jesus, you are the Risen One who calls us from fear into faith: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you are the Truth whom no falsehood can overcome: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you send us forth as joyful witnesses of your victory: **Lord, have mercy.**

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,  
who raised his Son from the dead  
and filled the first disciples with awe and great joy,  
have mercy on us,  
forgive us our sins,  
free us from all fear and falsehood,  
and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

## INTRODUCTION TO THE GLORIA

On this Easter Monday, the Church continues her song of victory. The Gloria is not just an ancient hymn; it is the Church's joyful response to the resurrection. Like the women who ran from the tomb with great joy, we lift our voices in praise of the God who has conquered death and restored our life. Let us join the angels and saints in proclaiming God's glory.

## COLLECT

O God,  
who give constant increase to your Church  
by new offspring,  
grant that your servants may hold fast in their lives  
to the Sacrament they have received in faith.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Homily

I once heard of a small boy who, on Easter morning, quietly followed the bell ringer up the church tower before dawn. When the bell tolled, he expected only sound—but instead he felt something stir in his heart, a warmth and joy that went beyond words. That, in a small way, is the experience of the first witnesses to the resurrection: awe and joy that can transform everything. In today's gospel, the women at the tomb are described as being "filled with awe and great joy." Awe comes from

seeing God's power at work: Jesus, who had been crucified, is now raised to new life. That life is not distant; it is present and active, offering strength and hope in the midst of our struggles. Even when life feels uncertain or threatening, Easter reminds us that God's love is stronger than anything we fear, and that death is not the final word. Joy, the second emotion the women felt, is equally profound. It is not dependent on circumstances but rooted in the Spirit, poured into our hearts by God. Saint Paul knew this joy even in prison, when facing possible execution. He writes to the Philippians: "I rejoice... I can do all things through him who strengthens me." These words remind us that the source of our joy is not in ourselves, but in the Lord's loving presence with us, sustaining us in every trial.

The gospel also presents a stark contrast. The women worshipped Jesus and immediately went forth as messengers, sent to tell the disciples that the Lord was alive and would meet them in Galilee. The chief priests and soldiers, in contrast, spread lies, claiming that the disciples

had stolen Jesus' body. From the very first Easter Sunday, there were those who sought to suppress the truth. Today, too, falsehoods and scepticism surround the good news. Yet no lie can overpower the reality of the resurrection. Life triumphs over death, love over hatred, and hope over despair.

We are called to identify with the women. Like them, we fall before the risen Lord in worship, we receive his strength and joy, and we go forth to proclaim his victory in the way we live. Easter is not just a historical event; it is a living reality that invites us into action. We carry the message of life into our families, workplaces, communities, and the world, offering hope where there is fear, compassion where there is indifference, and joy where there is sorrow.

I once read about an elderly woman who, every Easter Monday, visited local cemeteries. She brought flowers not only for her family but also for strangers, saying, "Every grave I visit, I see hope." In her small acts of devotion, she embodied the Easter message: even in places associated with death, life and hope prevail. We too are called to be

messengers of this life, proclaiming with our actions and words that the Lord is risen.

This Easter Monday, may we allow awe and joy to touch our hearts. May we draw strength from the risen Lord and rely on his presence in our lives. And may we go forth as witnesses of the truth: that Jesus Christ has conquered death, God's love endures, and life, in its fullest sense, always triumphs.

### **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

As the women brought their devotion and love to the tomb, we now bring to this altar the ordinary gifts of bread and wine — and with them, our lives: our work, our struggles, our hopes. Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

### **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Receive, we pray, O Lord, the offerings of your exultant Church, and, as you have given her cause for such great gladness, grant also that the gifts we bring may bear fruit in perpetual happiness.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **PREFACE (EASTER PREFACE I – THE PASCHAL MYSTERY)**

It is truly right and just,  
our duty and our salvation,  
at all times to acclaim you, O Lord,  
but on this day above all  
to laud you yet more gloriously,  
when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed.

For he is the true Lamb  
who has taken away the sins of the world;  
by dying he has destroyed our death,  
and by rising restored our life.

Therefore, overcome with paschal joy,  
every land, every people exults in your praise  
and even the heavenly Powers, with the angelic hosts,  
sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy...

## INVITATION TO THE LORD'S PRAYER

Formed by the joy of the Resurrection  
and trusting in the Father  
whose love is stronger than death,  
let us pray with confidence  
to the God who always brings life out of what seems  
finished:

### EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,  
especially from the fear that closes our hearts  
and the doubt that dims the light of Easter faith.  
Graciously grant peace in our days,  
that, by the help of your mercy,  
we may be always free from sin  
and safe from all distress,  
as we await the blessed hope  
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

## PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,  
who appeared to your disciples  
and stood among them with the gift of peace,  
look not on our sins,  
nor on the divisions and falsehoods of our world,  
but on the faith of your Church,  
and graciously grant her peace and unity  
in accordance with your will.  
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,  
behold him who was crucified and is now risen,  
who has conquered death and restored our life.  
Blessed are those called to share in his victory  
at the supper of the Lamb.

## MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

The women left the tomb quickly, filled with awe and great joy, because they had encountered the living Lord. In Holy Communion, we too have encountered him. He has drawn near to us, not to overwhelm us, but to strengthen us from within.

Perhaps we do not always feel awe. Perhaps our joy is quiet rather than exuberant. Yet the risen Christ is at work in us all the same. His presence sustains us in trials, steadies us in uncertainty, and gives us courage to live truthfully in a world where truth is often obscured.

As we return to the ordinary rhythm of this day, may something of Easter remain within us — a deeper trust, a steadier hope, a gentler charity. And may others, through our words and actions, come to sense that Christ is truly risen and alive among us.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord God, in this holy sacrament  
you have renewed us with the life of your risen Son.  
As you filled the women at the tomb  
with awe and great joy,  
so strengthen us with Easter faith.

Make us steadfast in truth  
when falsehood surrounds us,  
courageous in witness  
when faith is tested,  
and joyful in hope  
even in the face of trial.

May the living presence of Christ within us  
shine through our words and actions,  
so that the world may come to believe  
that he is truly risen and alive.  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May almighty God bless you  
through today's Easter Solemnity  
and, in his compassion, defend you from every assault of  
sin. **Amen.**

And may he, who restores you to eternal life  
in the Resurrection of his Only Begotten,  
endow you with the prize of immortality. **Amen.**

Now that the days of the Lord's Passion have drawn to a  
close,  
may you who celebrate the gladness of the Paschal Feast  
come with Christ's help, and exulting in spirit,  
to those feasts that are celebrated in eternal joy. **Amen.**

And may the blessing of almighty God,  
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit,  
come down on you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

## DISMISSAL

Go forth, the Mass is ended, alleluia, alleluia.

**Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia.**

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

When things seem finished, remember the empty tomb.  
Carry into this week the awe and joy of Easter — and let  
your life quietly proclaim: *The Lord is risen, and hope lives  
on.*

## Tuesday in the Easter Octave

Acts 2,36-41; Jn 20,11-18

### INTRODUCTION

A primary school teacher once noticed that one of her students, a quiet and withdrawn boy, never seemed to expect much from anyone. One morning, as the class settled down, she paused beside his desk, looked at him warmly, and thanked him by name for the kindness he had shown to another child the day before. She said later that she would never forget what happened next: his shoulders straightened, his eyes brightened, and a shy smile appeared. "It was as though," she reflected, "he came alive because he realized he was seen and known."

There is something powerful about hearing our own name spoken with care. It tells us we matter. It reassures us that we are not invisible.

In today's Gospel, Mary Magdalene stands weeping outside the tomb. Her grief is so heavy that she does not recognize the risen Jesus standing near her. But then he

speaks a single word: "Mary." In that moment, sorrow gives way to recognition, darkness to light, loss to mission. She is known, loved, and called.

As we gather in this Easter season, we come before the same risen Lord. He is not distant or abstract. He stands among us, in the ordinary garden of our daily lives, and calls each of us by name. Let us open our hearts to hear his voice and to recognize his living presence in this Eucharist.

### PENITENTIAL ACT

Lord Jesus, you stand beside us even when sorrow blinds our eyes: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you call us by name and draw us into your friendship: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you send us to share the joy of your resurrection: **Lord, have mercy.**

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May the God who calls each of us by name forgive our sins, restore our hope, and lead us into the fullness of Easter life. **Amen.**

## INVITATION TO THE GLORIA

Having been called together by name and gathered into the joy of the resurrection, let us lift our voices in praise. With Mary Magdalene, who encountered the risen Lord in the garden, let us glorify God whose mercy turns sorrow into joy and whose love gives us new life.

## COLLECT

O God of new life, in the garden of the resurrection  
your Son called Mary by name  
and turned her sorrow into joy.  
Speak also to our hearts, that we may recognize the living  
Christ beside us,  
share in his communion with you,  
and be sent as witnesses of hope to the world.  
Through the same Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## HOMILY: "CALLED BY NAME"

I remember once visiting a friend who had just lost her father. She wandered around the empty house, moving from room to room, her tears unheeded, until she finally sank into a chair in the garden. She told me how she felt utterly alone, though she knew her father's presence lingered in the familiar corners of the home. In that moment, I thought of Mary Magdalene outside the tomb, weeping for Jesus. Like my friend, Mary was caught in grief so deep that she could not recognize the one who had come to her.

In today's gospel, we hear Mary weeping, searching for the Lord's body, and overwhelmed by loss. She did not see the risen Lord standing before her; at first, she mistook him for the gardener. And yet, he was there all along. The moment he called her by name, "Mary," her eyes were opened, and she recognized him. How tender, how personal is that encounter! The risen Lord does not come to humanity in some abstract way; he comes to each of us individually, knowing us, calling us by name.

This is the Easter gift: Jesus' resurrection opens a new way of being with God. When he tells Mary, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God," he invites her—and us—into his own intimate relationship with God. Through the Holy Spirit, we share in the prayer of Jesus, crying out to God as "Abba, Father." Easter is not simply about looking back at a historical event; it is about the living Lord coming into our hearts, drawing us into communion with God and with one another.

Mary's journey shows us another dimension of Easter faith. First, she weeps in sorrow; then, she recognizes the risen Lord; finally, she is sent to proclaim, "I have seen the Lord." Like Mary, our Easter journey involves grief, recognition, and mission. There are times when loss, longing, or sadness blinds us to God's presence. Perhaps we fail to see him in the ordinary, in the stranger, in the moments of everyday life—or even in the people we love. Yet, the Lord is always present, searching for us, calling us, waiting to transform our grief into joy, our sorrow into mission.

The garden where Mary meets the risen Lord is a rich image for our own lives. Gardens are places of care and new life. The gardener tends the soil so that life may flourish. In the same way, the Lord tends our hearts, nurturing us with his Spirit, inviting us to bear fruit in the lives we touch. Often, we do not recognize him at first. He comes in ways that are familiar yet changed, ordinary yet transcendent, until we hear the word that opens our eyes: our name.

Through Mary, Easter proclaims that death and despair do not have the final word. The risen Lord is present even when we cannot see him clearly. He speaks our name in the darkness, calls us into a relationship with God, and sends us forth as witnesses of his life. This is the grace of Easter: to be known, loved, and sent.

I once heard of a gardener who worked quietly every day in a small, forgotten corner of a city park. No one noticed him, but by spring, flowers had bloomed in abundance. Like that gardener, the Lord works quietly in our lives. Even when we are unaware, even when we feel lost or

abandoned, he is present. And when he calls our name, we recognize him, and our hearts overflow with joy. This is Easter: the Lord alive in us, calling us by name, inviting us to witness to life, love, and hope.

### **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

As Mary offered her love and fidelity in seeking the Lord, let us now place our gifts upon the altar, asking that our lives, too, may be transformed by the risen Christ.

### **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Lord of the garden of life,  
receive these simple gifts of bread and wine.

As your Son revealed himself in tenderness to Mary,  
so reveal his presence here,  
and change not only these offerings  
but also our hearts,  
that we may become signs of Easter joy.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **PREFACE**

It is truly right and just,  
our duty and our joy,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
Father of life and love.

For in the quiet of the garden  
you raised your Son from the tomb  
and turned mourning into gladness.  
When Mary's tears clouded her sight,  
he called her by name  
and opened her eyes to the dawn of new creation.

In him, death has lost its hold,  
despair has given way to hope,  
and humanity is drawn into your own life as Father.  
Through the Spirit, we are made your children,  
able to call upon you with trust and confidence.

And so, with hearts renewed by Easter joy,  
we join the angels and saints in proclaiming your glory:  
**Holy, Holy, Holy...**

## INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Saviour's command and formed by his Easter gift,  
we dare to pray to God as Jesus taught us, confident that  
the Father he revealed is also our Father.

## EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, from the darkness that blinds us to your  
presence. Free us from fear and discouragement,  
and grant that, hearing your Son call us by name,  
we may live in the freedom and peace of his resurrection,  
as we await the fullness of his glory.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,  
in the garden you spoke peace into Mary's troubled heart.  
Look not on our failures,  
but on the faith you awaken within us.  
Speak your word of peace to your Church and to our world,  
that where there is grief, hope may rise,  
and where there is division, communion may flourish.  
You live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the risen Lord,  
who calls each of us by name  
and invites us to share his own life.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

In the stillness of this moment,  
let us imagine the Lord speaking our name with love.  
He knows our griefs, our hopes, our hidden struggles.  
He stands beside us, alive and faithful.

May his voice echo in our hearts,  
turning sorrow into joy and calling us to bear witness:  
"I have seen the Lord."

## POST COMMUNION PRAYER

God of abiding presence, through this holy meal  
you have nourished us with the life of your risen Son.  
Remain with us as we walk through the gardens of our  
daily lives. Open our eyes to recognize him, strengthen us  
to share his hope, and send us forth as joyful messengers  
of Easter. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Father who lovingly calls you his children bless you. **Amen.**

May the Son who speaks your name and fills you with joy strengthen you. **Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit, who sends you to proclaim life and hope, guide you always. **Amen.**

And may almighty God bless you,  
the Father, ✠ and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

## DISMISSAL

Go in the peace of the risen Lord, who calls you by name.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Sometime today, pause in silence and imagine the risen Jesus speaking your name with love. Let that voice guide you — and be ready to speak hope into someone else's life.

## Wednesday in the Easter Octave

*Acts 3,1-10; Lk 24,13-35*

## INTRODUCTION

A man once described how, after the death of his wife, he continued to walk every evening along the same coastal path they had shared for years. At first, he walked with his head down, replaying memories and feeling the weight of absence. One evening, a neighbour fell into step beside him. They did not speak much. But the quiet companionship changed something. “I realised,” he said later, “that I did not have to walk alone.”

In today's Gospel, two disciples walk a road overshadowed by grief. They believe they are alone in their disappointment. Yet the risen Lord walks beside them, listens to their story, opens the Scriptures to them, and reveals himself in the breaking of bread.

In the first reading, Peter and John look into the eyes of a crippled man and restore him not only to health, but to dignity and hope.

Today, the risen Lord walks with us. He sees us. He listens to us. He invites us to bring our story to this altar, where he will once again open our eyes in the breaking of bread.

Let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate these sacred mysteries.

### **PENITENTIAL ACT**

Lord Jesus, you walk with us even when we lose our way:

**Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you listen patiently to the story of our fears and disappointments: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you reveal yourself in the breaking of the bread and set our hearts on fire: **Lord, have mercy.**

### **PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION**

Risen Lord, you walk with us on the roads of our lives.

You listen to our fears, our doubts, and our sorrows.

Forgive us when we fail to recognise your presence,

when we walk alone in grief or despair,

and open our eyes to the new life you offer,

and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE GLORIA**

In this Easter season, our sadness is turned to joy and our despair to hope.

With the disciples whose eyes were opened, let us raise our voices in praise of the risen Lord.

### **COLLECT**

Risen Lord Jesus,

you draw near to us on the roads of our lives

and make yourself known in word and sacrament;

open the eyes of our hearts,

that, listening to your voice and recognising your presence,

we may return with joy to the places you send us,

to bear witness to your living hope.

Who live and reign with the Father

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## HOMILY: THE LORD WALKS WITH US

A young woman once told me about a time she was struggling after losing a job she loved. One evening, she went for a walk through the city, head down, lost in thoughts of disappointment and fear for the future. As she walked, a stranger approached and simply asked, “Are you alright?” They began to talk, and she found herself sharing her worries, her sadness, and her sense of failure. The stranger listened patiently, then offered a perspective she hadn’t considered. By the end of their brief encounter, she felt lighter, her heart less burdened, and she returned home with a renewed sense of hope.

Today’s readings remind us of that same experience, but on a far deeper, spiritual level. In the first reading, we see Peter and John encountering a man crippled from birth. Before doing anything else, they looked him in the eye and said, “Look at us.” That simple act of eye contact was more than politeness—it was recognition of his dignity, a silent communication that he was seen, known, and valued. Eyes can indeed be “the windows to the soul.” Through

that connection, Peter and John became instruments of God’s healing. Similarly, our attentive gaze and our careful listening can create moments of communion that transform lives in ways we may never fully realize.

The Gospel takes us to the road to Emmaus. Two disciples, burdened by grief and disappointed hopes, were walking away from Jerusalem, away from life and community. Their faces were downcast, and they confessed to a stranger, “We had hoped.” In their sorrow, they were blind to the life that had already triumphed in Jesus’ resurrection. Yet the risen Lord walked with them, inviting them to share their story, listening with patience and care. In this attentive listening, Jesus created a communion that opened their hearts. He revealed the bigger story of God’s work in Scripture and finally made himself known in the breaking of bread. Their sadness turned to joy, their despair to hope, and they returned to Jerusalem, renewed and transformed.

Notice the parallel between the crippled man and the two disciples. One was physically crippled; the other spiritually

and emotionally crippled by grief. In both cases, the risen Lord entered into their reality, not with judgment, but with presence and care. He met them where they were, yet led them to see beyond their immediate suffering to the life-giving reality of God's love and resurrection.

We, too, often walk away from places or situations that remind us of pain or loss. Sometimes it is wise to step back, but sometimes the very places we avoid are where God is at work, planting seeds of new life. Just as the disciples needed to remain in Jerusalem to witness the outpouring of the Spirit and the birth of the Church, there are moments when our presence in challenging places allows us to encounter God's transforming grace.

Prayer works in a similar way. We bring to God our own stories, with all their sadness and confusion. Like the disciples on the road, we are invited to share, and then to listen—to allow God's word, spoken in Scripture or revealed in the Eucharist, to reshape our hearts. It is in that two-way dialogue of speaking and listening, giving and receiving, that our eyes are opened and our hearts burn

with the fire of faith.

This Easter season is a reminder that the risen Lord is always journeying with us. Even when we move in the wrong direction, even when grief or despair clouds our vision, Christ walks beside us. He invites us to tell him our story, to hear his word, and to be transformed. Yet he also waits for us to take initiative: to ask him to stay with us, to open ourselves to his presence in the company of fellow believers, and to let that presence guide us back to life, community, and hope.

We end where we began—with that young woman on her city walk. Sometimes we only recognize the Lord's presence when we pause, share our story, and allow ourselves to be truly seen and heard. The risen Christ invites us to open our eyes, our hearts, and our lives so that we, too, might walk renewed, transformed, and filled with the joy of Easter.

Let us pray: "Stay with us, Lord, on the road of our lives, so that our hearts may burn with your love and our steps be turned toward life and hope."

## INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

As the disciples placed before the Lord their confusion and their hope, let us place upon this altar the offerings of our lives, asking God to transform them by Easter grace. May they be acceptable to God the Father almighty.

## PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord God, receive these gifts, signs of our labour and our longing; as you turned the bewilderment of the disciples into burning faith and joyful witness, so transform these offerings into the sacrament of your risen Son, that we who share this holy meal may walk in newness of life. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## PREFACE – THE LORD WHO WALKS WITH US

It is truly right and just, our duty and our joy,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
Father most holy, through Jesus Christ, your risen Son.

For after his resurrection  
he did not abandon his disciples in their fear,  
but walked beside them in their confusion,

listened to their sorrow,  
and opened to them the hidden meaning of the Scriptures.  
In the breaking of the bread  
he revealed himself as the Living One,  
turning despair into courage  
and grief into unquenchable hope.

And so, with hearts set ablaze by Easter joy,  
we join the angels and saints in their unending hymn of  
praise:

**Holy, Holy, Holy...**

## INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

The disciples' hearts burned within them when the Lord  
walked beside them.

Today, Jesus walks with us, listening to our story, opening  
our eyes, and transforming our sadness into hope.

Confident that he is near, let us bring all our prayers and  
longings to the Father, and pray as he taught us:

## EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,  
especially the discouragement that blinds us to your  
presence. Grant us peace in our days,  
that, sustained by the hope of the Resurrection  
and confident that you walk beside us,  
we may be freed from fear and despair  
as we await the blessed hope  
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

## PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you turned fearful disciples into joyful witnesses  
by the gift of your peace;  
look not on our weaknesses or doubts,  
but on the faith of your Church,  
and graciously grant her unity and peace  
according to your will.

Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lord who walks with us, who speaks to our  
hearts and is made known in the breaking of the bread.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

“Were not our hearts burning within us...?”

In this Eucharist, the risen Christ has drawn near to us  
again. He has listened to our unspoken prayers.

He has spoken his word into our lives.

He has broken bread for us.

May we leave this place with hearts rekindled,  
ready to recognise him in the stranger, the suffering, and  
the companion on our road.

## POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Lord our God, in this sacred meal you have opened the  
Scriptures to us and revealed your Son in the breaking of  
the bread; grant that, nourished by this Easter sacrament,  
we may walk with steadfast faith and generous love,  
bringing the light of Christ to all whose steps are burdened.  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the God of hope  
fill you with all joy and peace in believing. **Amen.**  
May Christ, the risen Lord,  
walk beside you on every road you travel. **Amen.**  
May the Holy Spirit  
set your hearts ablaze with the fire of Easter faith. **Amen.**  
And may almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son,  
✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace, with hearts burning and eyes opened.  
**Alleluia, alleluia.**

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

This week, notice who is walking beside you.  
Pause. Listen. Share your story.  
You may discover that the risen Lord has been nearer than  
you imagined — waiting to set your heart on fire.

## Thursday in the Easter Octave

*Acts 3,11-26; Lk 24,35-48*

## INTRODUCTION

A woman once shared how, after months of disappointment and quiet discouragement, she went for an evening walk simply to escape her own thoughts. By chance she met an old mentor who gently invited her to speak about what she was carrying inside. As she spoke, something unexpected happened: the weight she had been holding alone began to lift. By telling her story aloud, hope quietly returned. She later said, “I think hope was already there—but it needed to be spoken before it could breathe.”

In today’s Gospel, the disciples experience something similar. The two who had walked to Emmaus return to Jerusalem and begin telling their story—how their hearts burned on the road, how they recognized the Lord in the breaking of the bread. Their sharing creates space for

grace. In the very act of speaking, Jesus stands among them and says, “Peace be with you.”

At first they are frightened and doubtful. Joy seems too good to be trusted. But the Lord patiently shows them his wounds and opens their minds to understand. Their fear slowly turns to astonishment, and their astonishment becomes mission.

Easter reminds us that when we dare to share our story of faith—our doubts, wounds, hopes, and encounters—the risen Christ stands among us. He brings peace where there was fear and sends us forth as witnesses.

Let us open our hearts to his presence now.

## **PENITENTIAL ACT**

Lord Jesus, you stand among your disciples and speak peace into their fear: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you reveal your wounds and turn doubt into joy: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you open our minds to understand the Scriptures and send us as witnesses: **Lord, have mercy.**

## **PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION**

May almighty God,  
who in his mercy gathered the fearful disciples  
and stood among them with words of peace,  
look with compassion upon our weakness.

As he revealed the wounds of his Son  
and turned their doubt into rejoicing,  
may he forgive our sins,  
heal the wounds of our hearts,  
open our minds to understand the Scriptures,  
and restore in us the joy of the Resurrection.

And may he bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE GLORIA**

The risen Lord stands in our midst and fills us with peace  
and astonished joy.

With the angels and the whole Church, let us lift our voices  
in praise as we sing:

**Glory to God in the highest.**

## COLLECT

O God of living hope,  
who gathered your fearful disciples  
and revealed to them the wounds of your Son  
as signs of victory and peace,  
open our hearts to understand the mystery of his  
Resurrection.  
When doubt unsettles us and joy seems distant,  
let his presence stand among us  
and restore our courage.  
Grant that, renewed by Easter grace,  
we may become faithful witnesses  
of repentance and forgiveness in his name.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## HOMILY:

I want to begin with a story. A few years ago, a friend of mine shared how she had lost hope after a series of personal setbacks. One evening, she decided to take a walk to clear her mind. On that walk, she ran into an old mentor who began asking about her life, listening with genuine interest. As she recounted her struggles, she realized that speaking them aloud and sharing her story made her feel lighter, less burdened. At the end of their conversation, she noticed a shift: she felt a spark of hope she hadn't felt in months. Sometimes, the simple act of sharing our journey can bring unexpected grace into our lives.

In today's gospel, we encounter the disciples in a similar situation. The two disciples who had journeyed to Emmaus return to the others and share their story—how they had encountered the risen Lord on the road and recognized him in the breaking of the bread. Their story begins in darkness, confusion, and grief, yet it ends in joy and amazement. As they speak, the risen Lord suddenly stands

among all of them and offers the greeting, “Peace be with you.” Their telling of their story opens a space for the Lord’s presence.

What strikes me is the emotional journey the disciples experience. Initially, they are alarmed and frightened, thinking they are seeing a ghost. Then, as Jesus shows them his hands and feet, their fear gives way to joy so profound that they cannot fully believe it. Their astonishment mirrors something we often experience today: the resurrection is astonishing, almost too good to be true. Like them, we may find it easier to dwell on suffering, pain, or loss than on joy, renewal, and hope. Yet Easter calls us to step into the “Stations of Light,” to witness the appearances of the risen Lord and allow ourselves to be transformed by them.

This transformation is not just for personal comfort. When the disciples share their story, the risen Lord makes himself present in the midst of the community. When we share our own faith journeys—our doubts, our struggles, our moments of hope—we invite the Lord to stand among

others. Our stories become vessels of peace, joy, and encouragement. Just as the disciples are sent to be witnesses of the resurrection, so too are we called to share the living presence of Jesus with the world around us.

Easter surprises us. It shatters our expectations and reminds us that death, failure, and despair are never the final word. Jesus stands among us even when we feel lost, even when we doubt, even when joy seems impossible. He offers his peace, and in that peace, we find courage to continue, hope to persevere, and the joy of knowing that our story is never separate from his.

I want to end with a short story. A teacher once asked her students to write down a personal experience that changed them. One shy boy wrote about how he had been afraid of speaking in front of others, but when he shared his story about helping a younger sibling, his classmates listened intently and applauded him. The boy realized that by telling his story, he had not only found confidence but had also inspired others. Like that boy, like the disciples, we discover that our stories, when shared in the presence of

the risen Lord, have the power to bring hope, peace, and joy into the lives of others.

Today, in this Easter season, may we all be brave enough to share our journey, and may we all recognize the risen Lord standing among us, offering his peace and sending us forth as witnesses of his love.

### **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

As the disciples recognized the Lord in the breaking of the bread, let us place upon this altar the offerings of our lives, that Christ may again reveal himself in our midst.

### **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Receive, O Lord, we pray,  
the gifts we bring in this season of Easter joy,  
and as your Son stood among his disciples  
and transformed their fear into peace, so may these  
offerings become for us the sacrament of his living  
presence. Grant that, nourished by this mystery,  
we may bear witness to his Resurrection  
in word and deed. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **PREFACE (EASTER THEME – WITNESS AND PEACE)**

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,  
at all times to acclaim you, O Lord, but in this time above  
all to praise you yet more gloriously  
when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed.  
For after rising from the dead, he stood among his  
disciples, not as a memory of the past  
but as the Living One who conquers death.  
He showed them his wounded hands and feet,  
turning fear into courage and doubt into radiant joy.  
He opened their minds to the Scriptures  
and sent them forth as witnesses  
that repentance and forgiveness  
might be proclaimed to all nations.

And so, overcome with Easter gladness,  
every land, every people exults in your praise,  
and even the heavenly Powers, with the angelic hosts,  
sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they  
acclaim: **Holy, Holy, Holy...**

## INVITATION TO THE LORD'S PRAYER

At the Saviour's command and formed by his teaching, confident that the risen Lord stands among us as our peace, we dare to say:

### EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, and graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be freed from fear and discouragement and kept secure in the hope of the Resurrection, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

### PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your Apostles:  
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you.  
Look not on our doubts and hesitations, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will.  
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Risen Lord, who stands among us and says, "Peace be with you."  
Behold him whose wounded hands bring forgiveness and life. Blessed are those called to share in the joy of his Resurrection.

### SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

The disciples rejoiced, yet still wondered.  
Joy sometimes feels too great to grasp.  
In this Eucharist, the Lord has again stood among us.  
May his presence calm our fears, steady our hearts, and send us forth to share the story of what we have seen and heard.

### POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that the grace received in this Paschal Sacrament may remain alive in our hearts.  
As your Son revealed himself in the breaking of the bread and opened the minds of his disciples, so may he enlighten us and strengthen us to be his witnesses in the world. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing. **Amen.**

May the Risen Lord stand beside you in every trial and make you courageous in faith. **Amen.**

And may almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace, proclaiming by your life  
that the Lord is truly risen.

**Thanks be to God.**

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

This week, share one small part of your faith story with someone—a moment of struggle, hope, or quiet grace. You may discover that in the telling, Christ stands among you both and says, “Peace be with you.”

## Friday in the Easter Octave - *Acts 4,1-12; Jn 21,1-14*

## INTRODUCTION

A retired fisherman once told me that the hardest part of his work was not the storms, nor even the long hours at sea. The hardest part, he said, was returning to shore with empty nets. “You begin to question yourself,” he admitted. “You wonder if you have lost your touch.” Yet one morning, after such a night, he saw the sunrise break over the water and felt a quiet assurance that each new dawn carries another chance.

Today’s Gospel brings us to such a dawn. The disciples, weary and discouraged, return from a fruitless night of fishing. Into their disappointment, the risen Jesus appears—quietly, patiently—standing on the shore. He does not reproach them; he invites them: “Cast the net on the other side.” Their emptiness becomes abundance, their discouragement becomes communion around a charcoal fire.

As we gather in this Easter season, we come with our own empty nets—our failures, doubts, and fatigue. Yet Christ

stands on the shore of our lives. He calls us again, feeds us again, and sends us forward renewed.

### **PENITENTIAL ACT**

Lord Jesus, you stand on the shore of our lives and call us out of darkness into your marvellous light:

**Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you meet us in our failures and restore us with your faithful love: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you invite us to your table and renew our mission in the world: **Lord, have mercy.**

### **PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION**

May almighty God,

who in his mercy raised Jesus from the dead  
and did not abandon the disciples in their weakness,  
look kindly upon our poverty and our need.

May he forgive us the nights when we laboured without  
trust, restore us when we have returned to old fears,  
and fill our empty hands with the grace of new beginnings.

Through the power of the Resurrection,  
may he bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE GLORIA**

As dawn broke over the Sea of Tiberias, the disciples' sorrow turned to joy. In this Easter light, let us raise our voices with the angels and saints, giving glory to God whose love restores and renews us.

### **COLLECT**

O God of new beginnings,  
whose risen Son stood upon the shore  
and transformed despair into hope,  
grant that we who labour through the nights of uncertainty  
may recognize him at the break of day  
and trust his guiding word.

Fill our empty nets with the fruit of your grace  
and gather us into the communion of your love.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

## HOMILY: “JESUS ON THE SHORE”

Early one morning, a fisherman trudged down to the shore, weary from a long night of fruitless work. The nets were empty, his hands were sore, and hope seemed as distant as the horizon. Just as he was about to give up, a stranger called from the shore, “Cast your nets on the other side.” Hesitant at first, he obeyed—and the nets were filled beyond imagining. That morning, he realized that the light had come to him in his darkness, even when he thought all was lost.

In today’s gospel, we see the disciples in a similar situation. After Jesus’ crucifixion, they returned to what they knew best: fishing. Yet, all through the night, they caught nothing. Their failure at their familiar craft mirrors the spiritual and emotional failure they had experienced during Jesus’ passion. In the darkness of night—and of the soul—they labored in vain. But as dawn broke, a figure appeared on the shore. At first, they did not recognize him, yet it was the risen Lord, calling them again into life and mission.

There is something deeply moving about this encounter. Jesus did not scold the disciples for their abandonment or their fear. Instead, he invited them to begin again: “Come and have breakfast.” This simple gesture restored communion. It reminded them—and reminds us—that no matter how far we feel we have strayed, Jesus is faithful. He meets us in our failures, he stands patiently on the shore of our lives, and he invites us to renewal.

The gospel also speaks to the way light breaks into darkness. Night had concealed both their efforts and their despair, but the dawn brought recognition and abundance. The disciples’ empty nets became overflowing ones when they obeyed the Lord’s word. Easter reminds us that no matter how bleak or unproductive our nights may seem—spiritually, emotionally, or even professionally—the light of Christ shines in the darkness, and the fruit of his work is never absent.

Sometimes, as in the case of the beloved disciple recognizing Jesus first, we need help seeing what is right in front of us. We need companions who can open our

eyes to the presence of the Lord in moments when we are lost or discouraged. In this season of Easter, we are called not only to recognize the Lord ourselves but also to help others see him in their lives, especially when hope feels distant.

Like the disciples who went back to their fishing and discovered a renewed purpose, we too are called to step forward in faith. The Lord's invitation to communion—through prayer, through the Eucharist, and through acts of love—reminds us that our journey always has a future, no matter our past failures. We are called again, as they were, to cast our nets in a new direction, to bear fruit, and to participate in God's mission of bringing light to the world.

I'll end with a story from my own parish. A woman had been away from the Church for many years, feeling unworthy and distant. One Sunday, a friend simply said to her, "Come with me to breakfast after Mass." She went—and in the simple act of sharing a meal in communion, she felt the Lord's presence and love. That day marked a new beginning in her life, reminding her that Jesus meets us on

the shore, even when we least expect it, and that every encounter with him offers renewal.

May we, too, recognize Jesus standing on the shore of our lives, hear his call, and respond with hearts ready for communion, hope, and mission.

### **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Pray, brothers and sisters, that our sacrifice, born of our need and offered in hope, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

### **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Lord God,  
as your Son once prepared bread and fish  
for his disciples upon the shore,  
so now receive these gifts of bread and wine.  
Transform them by your Spirit  
that they may become for us the food of resurrection  
and the strength to labour fruitfully in your name.  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,  
at all times to acclaim you, O Lord,  
but in this Easter season above all  
to praise you yet more gloriously  
when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed.

For he is the risen Lord  
who stands upon the shores of human history,  
dispelling the darkness of doubt  
and filling the emptiness of our striving.  
By his word, nets once barren overflow;  
by his presence, hearts once fearful burn anew.  
Through him the dawn of eternal life has broken upon us,  
and we are called from failure into mission,  
from isolation into communion.  
And so, with Angels and Archangels,  
with Thrones and Dominions,  
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,  
we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:  
**Holy, Holy, Holy...**

## INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the dawn of a new day, the risen Lord gathered his  
disciples around a simple meal and restored them as  
brothers. With the same trust of children who know they  
are loved and forgiven, let us pray to the Father who  
always waits for us on the shore of mercy:

## EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, and graciously  
grant peace in our days, that, sustained by the light of the  
Resurrection, we may be freed from discouragement and  
fear and confident in casting our nets at your word.  
As we await the blessed hope  
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

## PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, who stood among your disciples  
and brought them the calm of your presence, look not on  
our shortcomings but on the faith of your Church,  
and graciously grant her peace and unity  
in accordance with your will.  
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Risen Lord, standing on the shore of our lives,  
offering himself as our food and our hope.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

In the quiet of this Eucharist, we have shared the breakfast  
of the risen Lord. He has filled our emptiness with his  
presence. May we leave this table certain that no night is  
endless, no labour in him is in vain, and no heart beyond  
his reach.

## POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Nourished by the sacrament of salvation,  
we ask you, Lord, that the communion we have shared  
may strengthen us for the work you entrust to us.

May the light of your risen Son  
guide our steps through every darkness,  
and may our lives bear abundant fruit for your glory.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May almighty God bless you,  
who has called you from empty nets to abundant life,  
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

## DISMISSAL

Go forth in peace, proclaiming by your lives that the Lord is  
risen and stands among us.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

When your nets seem empty and the night feels long, look  
toward the shore. Christ is already there, preparing a place  
for you and calling you to begin again.

Need a better payer of absolution and invitation to the Our  
Father...

Certainly — here are more substantial formulations, more  
closely echoing the themes of failure, renewal, and  
restored communion from the homily.

## Saturday in the Easter Octave - *Acts 4,13-21; Mk 16,9-15*

### INTRODUCTION

A teacher once placed a small object in the middle of a dim classroom and asked her students what they saw. Some guessed; others shrugged in uncertainty. Then she opened the blinds, and sunlight flooded the room. Instantly, what had seemed unclear became obvious. The object had not changed—the light had made the difference. What was always there could finally be seen.

In the Gospel today, the disciples stand in that half-light of confusion and grief. They hear the astonishing news that Jesus is alive, yet they cannot bring themselves to believe it. Sorrow clouds their vision; fear keeps their hearts guarded. Like the child searching in the garden or the students in the dim room, they struggle to recognise what is right before them.

And yet, the risen Lord does not abandon them in their doubt. He comes to them. He stands among them. He patiently opens their eyes and transforms their hesitation into courage.

As we gather on this Saturday in the Easter Octave, we too come with our own mixture of faith and uncertainty, hope and hesitation. The same risen Christ is present here—in his Word proclaimed and in the Eucharist we celebrate. Let us ask for the light of his Resurrection to flood our hearts, so that we may truly see, believe, and rejoice.

### PENITENTIAL ACT

Lord Jesus, you come among us with patience when our faith is weak. **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you open our eyes to recognise you in the breaking of the bread. **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you send us forth to proclaim what we have seen and heard. **Lord, have mercy.**

### PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who in his mercy raised Jesus from the dead and did not abandon the disciples in their weakness, look kindly upon us in our frailty.

May he forgive us our sins, strengthen our faith where it is hesitant, restore our hope where it has grown dim, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

## INTRODUCTION TO THE GLORIA

The disciples' sorrow was turned into joy when they recognised the Lord. With Easter hearts made new, let us lift our voices in praise to the God whose light conquers every darkness.

### COLLECT

O God of unfailing light,  
who in your risen Son  
have overcome the darkness of doubt and death,  
open the eyes of our hearts, we pray,  
that we may recognise his living presence among us  
and bear courageous witness  
to what we have seen and heard.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

## HOMILY: SEEING THE RISEN LORD

I once heard a story of a young boy who loved to play hide-and-seek in his grandmother's garden. One day, he searched high and low for his grandmother, calling her name, but she did not respond. Exhausted and frustrated, he was ready to give up, convinced she had gone. Then, unexpectedly, she stepped out from behind a tree and laughed, saying, "I've been here all along, just waiting for you to see me!" At that moment, the boy's disbelief turned into joy, and he ran to her, filled with amazement.

This is very much what we see in today's Gospel. After the crucifixion of Jesus, his closest disciples were in hiding, fearful and bewildered. When Mary Magdalene ran to them, excitedly proclaiming that she had seen the risen Lord, they refused to believe her. When the two disciples on the road to Emmaus returned with the same astonishing news, again, they could not accept it. The news of resurrection was too wonderful, too unexpected, and too challenging to their grief and doubt. Like the boy searching

for his grandmother, they struggled to believe that Jesus was truly alive.

Yet, the story does not end there. Jesus himself appeared to them, not as a ghost, but in a tangible, living presence. He reproached them gently for their unbelief and, in doing so, opened their eyes to the reality of resurrection. The disciples' doubts were met with patience, love, and truth. From that encounter, their fear and hesitation were replaced by courage and conviction. In the first reading, we see Peter and John, now emboldened, standing before the Jewish authorities and declaring, "We cannot promise to stop proclaiming what we have seen and heard." The risen Lord had transformed their disbelief into a fearless witness, a transformation that would ripple throughout history.

Perhaps we are not so different from those first disciples. It is often easier to believe in the suffering and death of Jesus than in his resurrection. The crucifixion is tangible and familiar; the resurrection is mysterious and demands faith. We too can be slow to believe in the good news, preferring caution over courage. Yet, the Easter message

is precisely that life triumphs over death, hope over despair, and love over sin. The Lord's resurrection is not merely a past event—it is a living reality meant to touch our lives today.

We are invited to experience this same encounter, even if we do not see Jesus with our eyes as the disciples did. We see him in the Scriptures, in the sacraments, in the Eucharist, and in one another. He comes patiently, repeatedly, until our hearts are open to receive the astonishing truth: Christ is risen, and his life is meant to flow through us. Just as the disciples went out to proclaim the good news to all creation, so too are we called to be bearers of this life-giving message through our words, actions, and example.

I am reminded of another story: a small lamp in a dark room may seem insignificant, yet when lit, it transforms the space, banishing shadows and illuminating corners that were hidden. In the same way, our faith, once enlivened by the risen Christ, becomes a light that cannot be hidden. It shines, even in the midst of doubt and fear, inviting others

to see and believe.

May we, like the first disciples, receive the risen Lord with open hearts, allow his life to dwell within us, and be courageous witnesses to the good news of Easter. Let us go forth, confident that the One who conquered death continues to walk with us, and through us, bringing light to the world.

### **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this our sacrifice may become a sign of our faith renewed and our hope restored in the risen Lord.

### **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Lord God, receive these gifts of your people, and as you once transformed fearful disciples into bold witnesses of the Resurrection, so transform these offerings into the sacrament of your Son's living presence, that we who share this mystery may shine with Easter faith.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **PREFACE (EASTER)**

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, at all times to acclaim you, O Lord, but in this Easter season above all to praise you yet more gloriously, when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed.

For he who was crucified now stands among his disciples in peace; he who was doubted reveals himself in patience and love; he who died now lives and sends us forth in courage.

Through him the light of Resurrection has dawned upon the world, and hearts once shadowed by fear are filled with hope.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:  
**Holy, Holy, Holy...**

## INVITATION TO THE LORD'S PRAYER

When the risen Lord stood among his disciples, he turned their fear into trust and their silence into bold proclamation. With that same confidence— no longer hiding, but believing— let us pray as he himself taught us:

### EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, and graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be freed from doubt and fear and live as joyful witnesses of the Resurrection, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

### PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, who stood among your disciples and calmed their troubled hearts with your presence, look not on our hesitations and failings, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will.

Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Risen Lord, alive among us, the One whom death could not hold. Blessed are those who are called to the supper of the Lamb and who believe in him whom they have not seen.

### MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. We too have encountered him—in Word proclaimed and Bread broken. May this quiet moment deepen our awareness that he has been here all along, waiting for us to recognise him.

### POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Renewed by the sacrament of salvation, we ask you, Lord, that the living presence of your risen Son may remain within us, strengthening our faith, dispelling our doubts, and making us steadfast witnesses to the light of Easter. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May almighty God bless you  
through today's Easter celebration  
and, in his compassion,  
defend you from every assault of sin. **Amen.**

And may he, who restores you to eternal life  
in the Resurrection of his Only Begotten,  
endow you with the prize of immortality. **Amen.**

And may the blessing of almighty God,  
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit,  
come down on you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

## DISMISSAL

Go forth in the peace of Christ,  
proclaiming with your lives  
what you have seen and heard.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

The risen Lord may at times seem hidden, but he is never  
absent. Ask each day for the light to recognise him—in  
Scripture, in the Eucharist, and in the ordinary moments of  
life—and let that light shine through you for others.

Need a better prayer of Absolution and introduction to the  
Our Father...

Certainly. Here are more substantial formulations, closely  
echoing the homily's themes of doubt transformed into faith  
and fear into courage.