

LET US NOT BE AFRAID BECAUSE THE NEW LIFE IS ENLIGHTENED BY THE NEW LIGHT

Easter Vigil Mass – 8 April 2023



Light shining on Christ the Redeemer - Corcovado Mountain, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

We normally wish one another, saying “Happy Easter!” around this season. Even non-Christians say, “Happy Easter” or “Happy Christmas!” This is a mere greeting, but it is beyond greeting. First, we wish one another to be happy during the Easter season. Second, Easter brings us happiness. So, what particular account of Easter makes us and Easter itself become happy?

There are many elements of Easter that draw us to be happy, from Jesus’s return to us, to our salvation through his resurrection. But the Word of God illustrates to us a clear reason for happiness: The risen Christ said to us, *“Do not be afraid!”* Back then 2000 years ago, there was no saying, “Happy Easter” So, the very first easter greeting made by Christ was *“Do not be afraid!”*

In fact, today is not the first time that Jesus says, *“Do not be afraid!”* He asked us not to be afraid consistently over the past six weeks. On the first Sunday of Lent, Jesus asked us not to have fear by overcoming the temptation from Satan. On the second Sunday of Lent, Christ asked us, via his disciples, not to be afraid after the transfiguration. On the solemnity of St Joseph, our co-patron saint Joseph was not afraid to have Mary as his wife. At the Annunciation, we were asked not to be afraid as our Mother Mary was.

But today, on the day of glory and joy, we are called twice not to be afraid of anything by the angel and the risen Christ, respectively. It is *“Do not be afraid”* that Jesus said in his word for the first time after his resurrection. His ultimate Easter message is “Having no fear!” What brought Jesus to say, *“Do not be afraid?”*

First, Mary Magdala and the other Mary went to the tomb at dawn. Can anyone be confident to visit any cemetery at 4 am-ish? But two women moved forward as they wished not to lose the sense of their connection with Christ. They would have had mixed feelings of fear, worry and curiosity because they had seen their master crucified. The force of death was still potent. They lost hope, meaning and a sense of faith too. Their fear peaked at the empty tomb because even in the cave, there was no physical body of Jesus. After they felt completely lost, Jesus surprisingly appeared. While two women were sensing nothingness, Jesus was telling them that there was no nothingness. The tomb was empty not because there was nothing in there, but Jesus rose again. The empty tomb is made not by having nothingness but the grace of Resurrection.

For two ladies, the consequence of encountering the risen Christ is not suspicion but affirmation of Christ who is with them. Their uncertainty changed into certainty. In other words, the two women entered into the new life. So, one of the reasons why we wish one another a happy Easter is to begin the new life given by the risen Christ. The new life still brings challenges. For instance, the risen Christ kept the scars of His wounds. But, Our Lord did not get distressed by those wounds or encountering pharisees, who had put him in death three days ago. Bearing those scars and all his challenges, Christ started a new life. St Paul reminds us of the new life that we will have with Christ through the last reading before the Gospel: *“As Christ was raised from the dead by the Father’s glory, we too might live a new life”* (Roman 6:4).

Brothers and sisters. We are gathering in this church to encounter the risen Christ. As we are here to meet with the risen Christ from whom and with whom we begin the new life. This church becomes a new empty tomb. Jesus asks us to put down all worries before him in this empty tomb. How much have we been afraid so far of war, climate change, housing and

so on. Worry was mixed up with the lack of hope. Listening to media these days, all we get is doom and gloom.

Amidst the gloom or sorrow and worry, we discover the very true light in our church, a new empty tomb. Today we have affirmed Jesus again as the true God since he rose again and approached us. In our faith, we believe that a new life is placed every time by the grace of the Resurrection. Today, let us reflect on what particular type of new life you would need from now onwards under the Easter blessings. For the new life, we need to be confident to put down all our worries before God as Mary Magdalene and the other Mary did. Jesus has risen, let us fill our hearts with the light from the risen Christ, the light in which we feel happy with our friend Jesus.

Peace
Deacon Minje Kim

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/040823.cfm>

Jesus Christ is Risen



Then the angel said to the women in reply,
“***Do not be afraid!***
I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified.
He is not here, for He has been raised just as he
said.”

Gospel of Matthew 28:1-10

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