

'DEATH INTO LIFE. EASTER IN PARIS, IN VIETNAM & IN BRACKEN RIDGE'

Easter Sunday – 21st April 2019

NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL PARIS

In the past week, there have been many discussions about the Notre Dame Cathedral tragedy in Paris. Photos and memories have been shared by those who have visited this historic church over the years. And those who had been planning to visit there later this year or next year.

Gratitude for the work of the firefighters.

Thanksgiving for the safe evacuations and that no one died.

Where then would they celebrate the Easter ceremonies this year, with very large numbers of people expected.

The Notre Dame Easter Ceremonies were transferred to other large capacity Catholic churches in Paris that would **host** the grieving community.

The Chrism Mass on Wednesday, the Holy Thursday Mass, the Good Friday Solemn Ceremony and the Holy Saturday Easter Vigil were celebrated at [St Sulpice](#) in Paris.

Easter Sunday morning Mass is being celebrated at [St Eustache](#).

We have prayed in solidarity with the people of Paris this week.

VIETNAM

The Chrism Mass in our Brisbane Archdiocese is celebrated the week before Holy Week in St Stephen's Cathedral.

This year in a Diocese in Vietnam, the venue for their Chrism Mass was moved to an area that has no resident priest.

The Bishop and others went in solidarity to a place that has experienced persecution, and celebrated the Chrism Mass there.

A ucanews.com article, [*'First Chrism Mass strengthens Vietnamese Catholics faith'*](#), tells us of a parish member, Joseph Lam Van Hung, 70.

He relates how the Chrism Mass brought, *"great comfort to local people who have suffered constant persecution."* and *"We have to follow our ancestors' example of bravery by being united in love to develop the parish,"*

The interview relates:

'Many Catholics were publicly denounced by the communists as landlords and killed or imprisoned from 1953-64.

Local Catholics had no resident priest for 40 years after the last one was jailed in 1964.

He said they have suffered various religious restrictions imposed by the government.

The parish with 3,600 Catholics still has no resident priests.'

OURSELVES

We might prefer our comfort zones.

Less trouble, less work.

Yet that particular diocese in Vietnam put the marginalized members first.

They planned together with the deanery and diocese to host it.

And others made travel arrangements to get there in solidarity.

At Easter time. Many here in Australia travel for family reasons.

Others travel for holidays, coinciding with school holidays and long weekends.

We pause and pray for those travelling over Easter.

[pause]

Jesus travelled too, from Galilee to Jerusalem for that first Easter.

Jesus journeyed that first Easter for us, to save us.

Let us pause to reflect on how we journey this Easter.

Journeying in minds and hearts.

Journeying in love.

Journeying in prayer.

[pause]

OUR EASTER CELEBRATIONS

We have celebrated our parish Holy Easter ceremonies:

- The gift of Jesus in the Eucharist – HOLY THURSDAY
- The reception of the Holy Oils for the ceremonies during the year to come – HOLY THURSDAY
- And the call to service by the washing of feet – HOLY THURSDAY

- The journey of Jesus to the cross – GOOD FRIDAY
- The death of Jesus for our salvation – GOOD FRIDAY
- The burial of Jesus in the tomb – GOOD FRIDAY

- The Blessing of the new Pascal Candle for our church liturgies during the year to come – EASTER
- The blessing of water for baptisms and for Holy Water to be taken back to our homes – EASTER
- The annual renewal of our baptismal promises and Christian faith commitment to God – EASTER
- **The resurrection of Jesus** – EASTER
- **And Jesus risen in our lives** – EVERYDAY

This Easter we recall moments when God turns moments of dying into new life.

The people of Notre Dame parish will turn their grief into new life.

The people in a Vietnamese diocese have turned the isolation and marginalization of a remote community into new life.

We have moments when we die to ourselves to arise anew in Jesus.
For example, dying to our sins and selfishness
that we may be more loving to God and our neighbour.

MARY MAGDALENE

In today's Easter Gospel we note the special place of Mary Magdalene who witnesses to the Risen Christ.

And we ask ourselves, how we as Church,
are called by Jesus to die to our prejudices, to die to our fears,
so that we can truly see and receive the invitation of Jesus,
to all of us, to witness to the Risen Christ.

Let us bring our questions to today's Gospel.

TODAY'S GOSPEL OF JOHN 20:1-9

We listen to today's Gospel.

*“Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark,
Mary Magdalene came to the tomb
and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.
So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple,
the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them,
‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb,
and we do not know where they have laid him.’”*

We pause and identify with Mary Magdalene.
Already grieving deeply at the death of Jesus.
She is now concerned that the authorities have stolen his body.
She seeks out another two of the disciples.
She shows **initiative** once more.
In their grief, the other two disciples run to the tomb.
The sense of urgency.
We imagine their **thoughts**.
We imagine their **feelings**.

The Gospel passage tells us of their journey, their entry into the tomb.
Peter enters first. Then the other disciple.

Let us now continue from where today's passage ends.
Two of the disciples return home.

Mary again shows initiative, an **initiative to grieve at the tomb**.

Weeping, she looks into the tomb and encounters the angels sent by God.

*“As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb;
and she saw two angels in white,
sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying,*

*one at the head and the other at the feet.
They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?'
She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord,
and I do not know where they have laid him.' "*

She encounters Jesus outside the tomb but thinks he must be the gardener.

*"Jesus said to her,
 '**Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?**'"*

*Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him,
'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him,
and I will take him away.' "*

We ask ourselves 'WHO ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?'

Jesus calls her by name. She recognizes him.

Jesus calls us by name. Let us recognize him joyfully.

*"Jesus said to her,
 '**Mary!**'
She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher).*

*Jesus said to her,
 '**Do not hold on to me,
because I have not yet ascended to the Father.
But go to my brothers and say to them,
"I am ascending to my Father and your Father,
to my God and your God."**'"*

Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples,

*'I have seen the Lord';
and she told them that he had said these things to her."*

Mary is a model to each of us.

Of being open to the invitation of Jesus to new life.

We are invited this weekend to be open to new life in Jesus.

We place our concerns and issues before Jesus.

But we don't leave them buried afterwards in the tomb.

The injustice, trauma, ridicule and incredible pain that Jesus faced for us.

We can, in solidarity, remember those suffering here and elsewhere.

But not in a pessimistic way. **Jesus is risen from the dead. Alleluia.**

We face the pain in our world, in our families, in our community, **with hope.**

We don't bury our concerns in the tomb.

We place them before Jesus – with open hearts.

We conclude our homily reflection with a truly inspiring story of faith.
Pope Francis recently reminded us how organ donors bring new life to people.
[‘Pope: Organ donation manifestation of solidarity, no to commercialisation’](#)

In the spirit of Easter, one of many stories on new life is shared.

[pause while the story is shared]

Let us pray.
Alleluia. Alleluia.

Fr. Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/042119.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook21042019>]



Appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene | Alexander Ivanov | public domain