

Fr. Nick Dant's Homily, Saint Matthew Catholic Church, Indianapolis
Easter, April 11-12, 2020, Cycle A

With great joy this night/day we greet Christ raised from the dead. Jesus is our light and our Salvation. Breaking the bonds of sin and death, Christ Jesus calls us to the empty tomb – to join Mary Magdalene and the other Mary in amazement as they encounter the first sign that the Lord is Risen!

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia (Sung to the tune of "Ye Sons and Daughters")

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary find the huge stone to the tomb rolled back and are amazed at the discovery of the empty tomb – the body of Jesus is gone! Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were overjoyed when told by the angel in white garments "He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said."

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia (Sing)

In the Acts of the Apostles on Easter Day we will be told that Jesus appeared alive to Peter and the other disciples – Peter proclaims to have witnessed the Risen Christ in his preaching on that first Pentecost – even saying that they ate and drank with the Risen Lord – only one who is fully alive can eat and drink! Even eating and drinking with the Risen Lord the disciples at first failed to recognize the Risen Lord – so beyond any ordinary human experience is the Risen Lord – all of the New Testament is unable to give an adequate description of the Risen Lord! Good News! Resurrection is more than resuscitating a dead body. Resurrection is more than immortality of the Soul. Jesus is raised body and soul – to full, eternal life. Life beyond our wildest imaginations!

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia (Sing)

And as St. Paul assures us, being baptized we have the joy of knowing that we share in Life of the Risen Lord- Now! Yes, we await the fullness of God's Kingdom but, for we who are baptized, eternal life has already begun. In baptism we followed Jesus from the darkness of sin and death into the Light that will never die out. In our resurrection hope, we dare this night/day to dance with joy on our tombstones, we dare even to dance with joy in the face of the coronavirus, and laugh, because death and chaos of this world--the chaos of war and violence, poverty and homelessness, unemployment and yes, even the coronavirus have no ultimate hold on us!

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! (sing)

For we find the tomb empty--with the holy women we do stand in awe, speechless--words cannot express our amazement, our wonder of the great love of our God for us. Jesus of Nazareth is Risen-made new! This night/day we find hope, we discover joy, "He is not here, He has been raised!" The cross of our lives as human beings has been vindicated--our lives of sorrow, pain, sickness, and death--for the crucified one is Risen! So, yes we dance for joy like fools among our graves--and throw our heads back and roar with laughter in the face of death – even in the face of the death the coronavirus is throwing at us. The suffering brought on by the coronavirus is only too real, but that Jesus is Risen is even more real! So we rejoice! This night/day we proclaim along with the great St. John Chrysostom at Easter centuries ago: Let no one bewail, let no one weep! Let no one fear death for the savior's death has set us free! He who was prisoner of death has annihilated death. By descending into death, he made death captive. Jesus angered death when death tasted his flesh. As John Chrysostom proclaims:

Death was angered when it encountered you in the lower regions.

Death was angered, for it was defeated.

Death was angered for it was mocked.

Death was angered for it was abolished.

Death was angered for it was overthrown.

Death was angered for it was bound in chains.

Death received a body and it met God face to face.

Death took that which is seen and fell upon the unseen.

O Death, where is your sting?

O Grave, where is your victory?

Christ is risen and you are overthrown.

Christ is risen and the devils have fallen.

Christ is risen and the angels rejoice.

Christ is risen and life reigns.

Christ is risen and not one dead remains in the grave.

For Christ, being risen from the dead has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep: to him all glory and honor, for all eternity.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! (Sing)