

I would like to begin by wishing you and your families a very Happy and Peaceful Easter!

If you have followed the liturgy of either the Easter Vigil or of Easter Sunday morning you may have already heard or read the account in the Gospel according to Matthew of Mary of Magdala and the other Mary visiting the tomb (Matthew 28:1-10). In this account the two women not only find that the tomb is empty but they also meet with the risen Jesus who tells them 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers that they must leave for Galilee; they will see me there.'

As Christians we believe that the Easter mystery, including not just Easter Sunday but all the events from Maundy Thursday through to Pentecost, is the mystery that gives meaning to our lives. So what can we draw from it for the situation in which we find ourselves at this time.

Jesus's first words to the women are 'Do not be afraid.' You perhaps know the statistic that this phrase occurs in the Bible some 365 times, once for each day of the year. However we perhaps need to hear and understand this on this Easter even more than we usually do. I am sure a number of us are feeling afraid and anxious, about our loved ones who we can't visit and see, about ourselves and our own health, and about what is to come in the weeks and months ahead. When we think about such things let us also hear the words of Jesus 'Do not be afraid'.

Jesus tells the women that they must tell the disciples to go to Galilee as he will meet with them there. Even though the disciples were scattered by the events of the passion this is not the end of the story, Jesus will gather them together again. Likewise we can be confident that the Lord will gather us together again as a community around the altar so that he can feed us with his body and blood in the Eucharist. We don't know when that will be, we can pray that it will be soon, but we can be confident that this will happen.

Meanwhile like the women we can encounter the Lord in the events of our lives, even in the most unexpected ways. Our inability to gather together as a community is an invitation to deepen our own relationship with the Lord through prayer and also through acts of service towards others in whatever means are open to us at this time.

I would like to add some words for those people whose lives have been touched directly by the covid-19 virus. Those who have had the virus themselves or who have seen others in their family suffering with it. We think especially of those who have lost loved ones in recent weeks, remembering that even if it was not the virus that took them, the current situation has deprived them of having the funeral liturgy that they would have wished for. We also think of and pray for those on the 'front line' in the fight against the virus, those in the medical and caring professions and those who put themselves at risk to maintain the essential services that we all rely on. May God bless you and prosper you in all your efforts.

I end as I began by wishing you and your families a Happy and a Peaceful Easter. Let us continue to keep one another in prayer.

Fr Eddy