

*St. Edward, St. George, St. Paul, St. Peter Parishes
Seattle, WA*

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Peace! Today, throughout the world, the Church echoes once more the astonishing message of the first disciples: “*Jesus is risen!*” – “*He is truly risen, as He said!*” By his resurrection, Jesus Christ has set us free from the slavery of sin and death, and has opened before us the way to eternal life.

We greet each other a very happy Easter, for this is a day of great promise and of great light as it was during the first Easter as it is today. It is full of promise because the one who embodied our death, who took on the burden of our sins, has been raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. We proclaim: **Alleluia, He is Risen!** With His rising from the dead, we are now given the chance to rise from our sins. In His rising from the dead, we now see beyond the shroud of death.

We need to heed the message of Easter because we know and experience the darkness of death. We watch the work of death every day - in the natural disasters, in the killings especially from gun violence and abortion, in the abuse of women and children, in the unfaithfulness, in the discriminations against immigrants and refugees, in our illness, in the passing away of our loved ones, and many other happenings that shake our faith in a loving God.

What happened? Why is there is so much pessimism and negativity? Why is hope and trust in our institutions eroding? I think we have forgotten our story – the story of Jesus who has overcome death, evil, sin. And in forgetting it, we have allowed the world to forget it as well. Let us stand up to the story of Jesus – who has captured the imagination of millions of people through the centuries.

This is what we celebrate this Easter Sunday. Let us recapture this most powerful story that has influenced every noble aspect of modern civilization. But amid the busyness of our daily lives, it is easy to become distracted and distance ourselves from this story. We have become too comfortably a part of the modern secular culture and this comfort has

resulted in a dangerous complacency toward the life-giving word of the Gospel. Too often, we listen to these words but do not allow them to penetrate our hearts and transform our lives.

We need to go back to the basics. I know this may sound cliché or trite. But when we Catholics dedicate ourselves to the basics of our rich and dynamic spirituality, extraordinary things begin to happen.

The first Christians intrigued the people of their time. So did the saints and so do ordinary people who embrace the Christian life. In the great majority of cases the saints didn't do anything spectacular. For the most part, they simply committed themselves to doing simple things well and with great love, and that intrigued people. We need to intrigue the people of our time in the same ways.

Does our life intrigue others? Not with spectacular accomplishments, but simply by the way we live, love and work. If we live and love as the Gospel invites us to, we will intrigue people. Respect and cherish your spouse and children, and people will be intrigued. Work hard and pay attention to the details of your work, and you will intrigue people. Go out of your way to help those in need, people will be intrigued. When we do what is right even if it comes at a great cost to ourselves, people are intrigued. Patience, kindness, humility, gratitude, generosity, courage and forgiveness are all intriguing.

In Jesus the ultimate effects of sin and death are overcome, for in Him God fulfills His promise to bring all creation to a new fulfillment, a new and glorious life. Today our hearts are full of joy as we greet our risen Lord and accept again His invitation to live in Him, to pray in Him, to rise again in Him, in God's good time.

A blessed Easter to you and your loved ones!

In the Love that binds us all,

Fr. Felino S. Paulino
Pastor