

Easter Sunday - B  
Acts 10:34a, 36-43;  
Colossians 3:1-4;  
Mark 16:1-8  
Little Flower - 4/4/21

*Alleluia, alleluia. This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad today. Alleluia.*

My Brothers and Sisters,

The parish staff and I want to wish all of you a most blessed and happy Easter. In a special way, we want to welcome all our visitors and all who are returning home to Little Flower to celebrate Easter with us.

When people are asked to name their favorite season, in my experience most people choose spring. The sun seems to shine more; the days grow longer and warmer; leaves, flowers, and grass reappear; birds sing. Spring is a time of passage from the death of winter to the life of summer. Spring, then, is the time of new life: the sights, sounds, and smells of spring proclaim new life. I know that during spring I feel more alive, more energized than any other time of the year.

This year our experience of spring has an added dimension. In *The Passover Trilogy*, Father Andrew Greeley suggested that each of the days of the Triduum focuses on one theme: community on Holy Thursday, freedom on Good Friday, and new life on Holy Saturday and Easter. This past year, because of COVID, we have been at least to some extent isolated from family, friends, and the various communities of which we are part. COVID restrictions have limited our freedom. Because of the isolation and restrictions, most of us have felt less alive. Tragically, many people have lost lives or their health because of COVID. This spring we are more connected and more free and feel more alive because of the vaccines and the lower numbers of positive cases, hospitalizations, and deaths. We are emerging from the winter of COVID to a spring of hope.

Today Christians throughout the world celebrate life. The church is filled with the symbols of life. The sights, the sounds, and the smells proclaim life: the Easter candle, symbol of Christ risen, alive, and present; the baptismal water, symbol of the church, symbol of the new life of baptism; the beautiful flowers, especially the Easter lilies, and the beautiful music. Today we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. To the Corinthians, Paul wrote that rising from the dead, Jesus became a life-giving spirit. Last night we celebrated the sacraments of initiation—baptism, Eucharist, and confirmation—with our Elect, a community act of faith in Christ the life-giver.

In an article entitled “A Triangular Theory of Love,” Robert Sternberg argued that consummate love or complete love involves intimacy, passion, and commitment. I would suggest that each day of the Triduum specifically celebrates one dimension of Jesus' consummate love for us.

Each Holy Thursday we recall Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples. In John's portrayal of the Last Supper, Jesus' intimate love for his disciples and, therefore, his intimate love for us is revealed. Jesus' words to his disciples are also true for us: “I no longer call you servants but friends” [15:15; paraphrased].

Each Good Friday we celebrate Jesus' passion and death on the cross. At the Last Supper, Jesus told his disciples, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends” [Jn. 15:13]. Jesus' passion and death revealed his passionate love for God and for us. Only a passionate love would cause someone freely to sacrifice his life for someone else.

Each Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday we begin our celebration of Jesus' resurrection. Because Jesus' resurrection is a sign of hope for us, it reveals Jesus' committed love for us. Through the power of Jesus' resurrection, we believe we share his life even now and carry within ourselves the promise of our own resurrection.

My brothers and sisters, Holy Week and Easter more than any other time reveal God's love for us in Jesus Christ, a love that is intimate, passionate, and committed. At the Last Supper, Jesus told his apostles, “Love one another as I love you” [Jn. 15:12]. As Christians, as individuals and as communities, our love for others must also be intimate, passionate, and committed.

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