St. Augustine
Catholic Church

April 12, 2020   Easter Sunday

Dear Parishioners:

What a delight it is once again to say those words and share some thoughts with you!

Today, we celebrate the central mystery of our faith, the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. St. Paul says: "if Jesus did not rise from the dead, our faith is in vain." He did rise from the dead, proving his divinity, and proving our faith is not in vain.

This gives us hope and this is what sustains us in the "Good Fridays" of our lives. If we are going to share in the life of Jesus, which began at our Baptism, we are going to share in his suffering and death and ultimately his Resurrection. Every Good Friday is followed by an Easter Sunday. This gives us hope in the midst of our sufferings.

This certainly has been true for me during the past year. As most of you are very aware, it has been just over a year since I was notified that I had been accused of sexually abusing a child over 30 years ago. After a thorough investigation over the year, it is clearly seen that there is not the slightest bit of evidence to support such an allegation. It has been a long Good Friday but during this entire year, I knew Jesus was alive and walking with me. He couldn't do this if he didn't rise from the dead.

One of the primary ways I experienced the life of Jesus during this year was thru your support. Many, many of you made phone calls, sent notes, emails and texts and a number of you made visits. I cannot begin to tell you how supportive this was. I knew and experienced that Jesus was alive thru you.

I was always confident that this day of "new life" would come. I had planned to have a beer, wine and pizza gathering on my first day back to thank you for your support. Obviously, this cannot happen in the midst of the coronavirus, but we will do this in the future.

Speaking of the Coronavirus, this is a Good Friday for all of us. Some of us experience it more directly. Those who take care of our health and safety needs are heroes in imminent danger. My niece's husband (54 years old) is in critical condition in an Intensive Care Unit in a hospital in Florida as a result of the virus. All of our lives have changed with tremendous inconvenience, not seeing our loved ones, financial strains and other ways. May we experience Jesus walking with us during this crisis. We couldn't do that if he did not rise from the dead.

Just because our churches are not open for public worship on Easter, it does not mean we cannot experience Jesus walking with us. Please pick up the Scriptures and read the accounts of the Resurrection. Come together with others (in person, over the phone or by FaceTime or Zoom) and pray with each other. "The family that prays together stays together." Jesus told us, "where two or three are gathered in my name, I am with you." That could not happen if he did not rise from the dead. During Lent we have been preparing to renew our baptismal promises. Just because we are not physically together, it does not mean we cannot do that. We can take time by ourselves or with others to say (and

think about) that I do reject sin, the glamour of evil and refuse to be mastered by sin and that I do believe in the Father, Son, Holy Spirit, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the resurrection and the life to come. This may be more meaningful than other years.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Fr. Bill Donnelly (Fr. Bill the elder) for serving so capably as Administrator of the parish during this past year. This was a tremendous disruption in his life and a gracious service to our parish community, another experience of Jesus being alive and walking with us on our journey.

Jesus came to destroy death and restore life. May all of us find ways to celebrate that and express our gratitude for that this Easter Sunday.

St. Augustine said we are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song. May we proclaim it from the hilltops. I know I will.

Happy Easter!

Fr. Bill Waters (the younger)

P.S. I am sorry this is so long. Actually that is a lie. I am not sorry at all, but just making up for lost time.