



And go quickly and tell
His disciples that

He is Risen

Matthew 28:7

Holy Week and Easter 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are nearing the end of our Lenten journey.

I have had the good fortune of making pilgrimages to many of the great shrines of our faith in my lifetime. There is always excitement when I'm preparing to leave. There is always the anticipation of wonderful people to meet and amazing experiences that will enrich my life. But I also find that after several days away, I begin to feel that it's really time to go home. That is what the 5th and 6th weeks of Lent feel like for me.

And that "home" for me is Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum with Easter Sunday. These central feasts of our faith are really the destination of this Lenten pilgrimage with Easter Sunday as a true homecoming. There is nothing we do as Catholics that is more important than to participate in the events of Jesus' Passion and Resurrection.

On Palm Sunday we will joyfully acknowledge Jesus as the Son of David; the completion of the ancient prophecies which tell of God's intention to fulfill his covenant with his people.

The Sacred Triduum begins on Holy Thursday with the institution of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and leading into the climax of that sacrifice on the cross on Good Friday. On Holy Saturday, the Great Vigil of Easter invites us to share in that *truly blessed night* (from the Easter Proclamation). We will celebrate the Rites of Initiation with Kristy Mahoney who has been preparing for over a year to share in the joy of our faith to await with us the glorious resurrection.

We come home on Easter Sunday, which begins the 50-day celebration of the Easter Season. "We are an Easter People" is how, through the ages, the church defines itself. That makes our mission as Catholics to be proclaimers of the truth of the resurrection of Jesus and the salvation it promises to all people.

This is an invitation to come home during this holiest of times. I want to especially extend the invitation to all who have been away from the church for any reason to come home and to help make this family at Immaculate Conception more vibrant, more welcoming, and more holy.

I pray through the intercession of Blessed Mary, our mother, and Blessed Joseph to help us constantly to strengthen our faith and open our hearts to all the gifts that the Holy Spirit grants us. My prayer as I stand at the altar of sacrifice in the sanctuary of our parish church is always for you, and your family. May our Easter celebration be a true homecoming as children of God, brothers and sisters in Christ, and graced by the Holy Spirit.

Sincerely in Christ,

Father Richard Degagne