

HOMILY FOR THE EASTER SUNDAY

THEME: THE LORD IS RISEN LET US REJOICE

There is a saying by our people that when a child eats what keeps him awake, he begins to feel asleep. For forty days now, we have been sorrowing, mourning, making sacrifices and mortifying our bodies one way or the other, all in a bid to subdue our weak flesh so as to strengthen our spirit and make it easier to obey the Lord. Last Sunday (Palm Sunday) marks the beginning of the Holy Week whose climax was the Triduum which began on the Holy Thursday and ended on yesterday (Holy Saturday). In these three most holy days of the catholic liturgical year, both heaven and earth were silent, grieving with the Lord as He suffered the most excruciating pain and death on the cross. Both heaven and earth were silent because the creator was humiliated, scornfully beaten, disdainfully crowned with thorn by His creature. The king was judged and maltreated by His subject. The master was killed by His slave. All these impossibilities that were made possible in Christ were some of the reasons why both heaven and earth were silent, that our warrior had gone the way of all mortals. Who will climb mount Calvary with the Lord and witness the inhuman treatment meted for His redeemer without shedding torrent of tears of blood if possible?

All these period of lent were forbade to sing alleluia or Gloria during mass. Today the master has proven Himself unconquerable, invincibly stronger than man and spirit by rising victoriously from the dead and death no longer has power over Him. By His wound we have all been healed. He has paid in full the price of our sins by His suffer and death. He has silenced death by His resurrection. His death and resurrection has repealed our sentence or eternal condemnation. He travelled into the recess of hell to raise those who were condemned to the hades before Him. He has taken away our pains and sorrows when He was stripped naked and hanged on the cross. When the cloth that barricaded the sanctuary and the holy of holies was torn, we were divinized, every barrier between God and us was removed. His death has freed us from the dominion of Satan so now we are set free. We proudly shout alleluia because He has finally conquered death and asked 'death where is your power, hell where is your victory?' Therefore, who will not rejoice? What is capable of restraining us from jubilating over our restoration?

Like Peter and Mary of Magdala, we should proudly go and announce to the world that He is risen. That we are among the privileged few to witness His resurrection. Sinner need not be afraid for our Lord is not interested in the yesterday of your life but the today. The price of your sins has been paid in full and your sentence repealed. Therefore all that is required of you is to go about singing unrestrainedly, alleluia in thanksgiving to the one who took our place to pay the price of our sin for this awesome deed of His. Mary Magdalene from whom seven demons was cast out later became one of the most privileged few to see the resurrected Lord.

Like the holy women who went early in the morning to anoint the body of the Lord, we should try to soothe the sorrows of those who are afflicted one way or the other with different kinds of difficulties. We should ask for divine anointing to keep afresh the baptismal vow we made during our baptism and which we renewed last night during the Easter vigil. Today the new day dawns in our lives therefore we should not go back to the old Egypt by revisiting our old habitual sins that had enslaved us all these years which was the reason for Jesus' suffering and death. As children of the resurrection, let the oil of holiness continue to spread through us so as to make ourselves loveable especially to God our Father.

Easter is the celebration of the God's unconditional love for humanity which made Him to offer such supreme sacrifice for the redemption of mankind. We have all been redeemed and Christ has said, 'if the Son of man sets you free, you are free indeed.' Like the biblical Bartimaeus, we should not keep quiet but should declare it on the top of the mountain, that God has set us free and that we have been raised from slavery to princes/princesses. Let alleluia fill our mouth.

During the lent, many if not all of us had made a resolution to drop some certain habitual sins, to pray more often, to allow God to take the lead in everything we do, we should not go back to those sins nor relapsed into prayerlessness. You may have denied Him several time like Peter, don't worry, as he pardoned Peter, He has pardoned you. You may have been prostituting with your life by letting yourself or/and wealth to take the place of God in your life, He asked Mary Magdalene who was caught in the act of adultery, '...did no one condemn you?' and when the latter replied, 'no sir' He said to her, 'neither will condemn you, go and sin no more?' So He has defended you before your accusers but He also says to you, 'go and sin no more.' You may have betrayed him several times like Judas, all that is required of

you is that should not relapse into despair as to commit suicide, but just say to Him I am sorry and your name will be blotted out of the book of death and be rewritten in the book of life.

We should constantly heed the admonition of St. Paul in today's second reading, to look for the things in heaven where Christ is sitting in the right hand of God. Our thoughts should be heavenly not earthly since to be earthly is to soil ourselves with the sins for which we were redeemed. According to him, we have died to those sins which in his letter to the Galatians he enumerated as: ***sexual immorality, impurities, sensuality, worship of false gods and sorcery; antagonisms and rivalry, jealousy, bad temper and quarrels, disagreements, factions and malice, drunkenness, orgies and all such things*** (Gal. 5:19ff) as children of the resurrection our lives should be that of love and charity since charity, Peter said, covers multitudes of sins. Prayer, especially family rosary should characterize our daily live as there no conceivable better ways of expressing our gratitude to such good a God than living a life worthy of our calling.