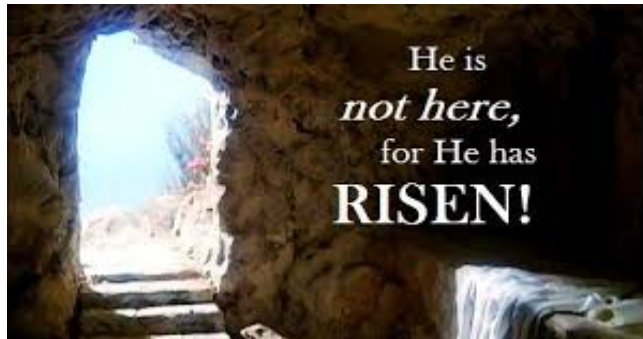


*Easter Sunday – April 12, 2020 - Live Streamed 10 AM*

*Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. (John 20:1-9)*



**Today is Easter Sunday.** We, together with the whole Christian world, **celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.** We should be celebrating and rejoicing because **the Lord is risen.** Yet, **something weird and eerie that might hold us back is truly embracing this spectacular event.**

The global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic **has disordered and shook the very fiber of our lives and faith.** As of today, Sunday, April 12, (Easter Sunday), **John Hopkins University and Medicine Coronavirus Resource Center** reported that there are 1,787,766 total COVID-19 confirmed cases, **185 countries/regions** affected, **109,691** resulted to death worldwide of which **more than 20,601 deaths** came from U.S. **These are depressing numbers.**

Like many of us who feel the pain of others, **I also feel the sorrow and anguish.** I would not be human if I don't feel sad and despaired. *Who would not be sad and depressed to see people suffering and even dying because of this horrible coronavirus pandemic? Who would not be sad to see families separated physically (grandparents couldn't even and wouldn't be with their grandchildren and vice-versa) because of social distancing and quarantine guidelines? Who would not be depressed to see people of faith cannot come physically to celebrate Mass with their families and community?* Who would not be sad to see priests, like myself, not able to celebrate Mass with our parish family – our congregations? [Today, on Easter Sunday, Christians churches around the world including ours here, should have been packed with people.] **It is also personal.** Our parishioners' families who passed these past few weeks – not because of COVID-19, but because of other reasons – cannot have (didn't have a proper burial). They need to limit their number of people attending the grace side service. Then, I have to lead

the grave-side service virtually, meaning on the phone or video-conferencing...] *It is a sad and depressing realities.*

Looking at these realities of suffering, anguish, and death alone will most probably not give us any reason to celebrate Easter. **Yet, I know and believe that we cannot celebrate Easter without Good Friday.** We cannot jump to Easter without going through the suffering and death of Jesus. This is what we, believers and Christians, call the Paschal Triduum. *Paschal Triduum is ONE celebration of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter (Vigil) Sunday.* Paschal Triduum is ONE (not three separate commemorations) *remembrance of the passion, death, and resurrection.*

**We can embrace the Jesus' resurrection (Easter) by also embracing His passion, suffering, and death.**

*I am in constant communication with our parishioners, families, friends, and acquaintances – praying and hoping that they take the necessary precautions to protect themselves and staying safe and healthy.* I know some of my parishioners, family, and friends are staying at home to help minimize the spread of this coronavirus. // I also know others who are nurses, medical people, doctors, EMTs, and those working in the hospitals, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, police officers, *all who are risking their lives to protect and keep us safe.* I also know that there more than **407,762 (of which 32,110 are Americans)** who recovered from coronavirus and are now staying safe and healthy (John Hopkins University Resource Center, April 12, 2020). I also know that the brightest and humble people across the globe are working hard to find the cure for this coronavirus pandemic.

Yes, like many of us, I feel sad and down because of suffering, pain, and death. *Jesus also suffered and was in pain carrying the cross, and even died on the cross for us.* Yet – we should not forget that **Jesus also rose from dead for us!**

This Easter is different; we all know that. We also know that **Easter is the focal point of our Christian faith. Easter is an essential ingredient of our Christian Paschal Triduum.** Our families, communities, countries, and the world will surpass this hardship and tribulation. Just as Jesus transcend his suffering and death into resurrection and everlasting life, we, too, believers and followers of Jesus, will transcend this pain, suffering, and death into a “new life with renewed faith.”

**Today is Easter. Together, we will rise again with Jesus from this global pandemic.**

I would like to share with you some poems written by our students from Our Lady of Mount Carmel school. These are excellent and original poems that attempt to illustrate the meaning of Easter from the perspectives of our young people. Perhaps we may learn a thing or two from these inspirational words.

### **Easter Inspiration**

The Easter Season is all about happiness but this one is different,  
This year isn't so pleasant,  
We have to stay away from relatives,  
Which makes us feel like fugitives

Easter is still about Jesus and his love,  
And if we show our love then we will fly like a dove,  
Easter is one of the happiest times of the year,  
It can stay like that if we just cheer

Resurrection Sunday is a delight,  
And when we go to church it makes us feel bright,  
In the Spring when the choir sings,  
It brings zing to our Easter thing

Fr. Michael's ceremonial homily will be inspirational,  
And families will leave joyful,  
Kids will be galloping in the tulips,  
And they won't be bugging the grownups

**By: Julian Rich, grade 7**

### **New Beginnings**

Easter is a time of rebirth,  
The whole family comes together,  
We hunt for our Easter Eggs,  
We enjoy the beautiful weather.

Mom's baking honey biscuits,

I can hardly wait to eat,  
After we finish our Easter dinner,  
We'll all have a special treat.

This year our family is missing,  
It's making me feel really sad,  
But we have to protect one another,  
Because Coronavirus is bad.

One day this will all be over,  
We'll say goodbye to COVID strife,  
We'll celebrate the birth of our savior,  
And welcome the joy of new LIFE!

**by: Nick Sirdashney, grade 7**

**Today is Easter. Let us hold on to Jesus, who has risen.** Let us not lose hope, but believe in Jesus' resurrection and life. **Together, we will rise again with Jesus from this global pandemic.**

**A Blessed and Holy Easter to everyone!**

**Homily by Rev. Michael A. de Leon, AM  
Pastor of Saint Simon Stock Parish**