

St. Leo The Great

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

130 Watford Street, Brooklin, ON L1M 1H2

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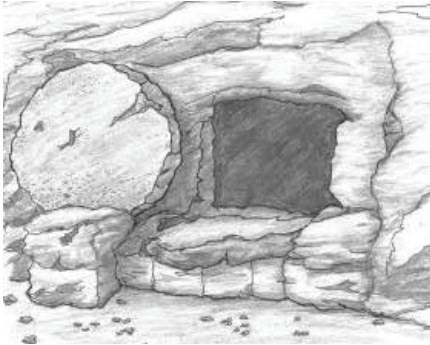
Pastor: Rev. Charles T. Forget

Parish Secretary: Magda Nowak 905-655-3286 x 101



HE IS RISEN! The Reality

Fulton Sheen said that the empty tomb was “the worlds’ most serious wound”. I remember when I visited the Holy Land with members of the choir from St. Patrick’s in Markham about ten years ago. I had never been to the Holy Land before and I wanted to make sure that I wasn’t seeing the holy sites as would a mere tourist, lurching and travelling and seeing all of the prime stops visited as just another church, ruin or pile of rocks. On the day we visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre I saw how large the building itself was and there were many hallways with



mosaics and sacred paintings that led to the Tomb of Jesus. I waited in line with the others of our tour group for our turn to go inside and view the final place where Jesus’ body was placed, the fourteenth and final station of the Cross. Because the doorway leading into the tomb is low and narrow, only a few people may go into the small room inside at the same time. I and two others went in and... quite frankly found the whole thing to be quite disappointing. I never shared my sense with the others since I was a priest and what would they think if the priest on the tour found one of the holiest places in all of Israel to be.... anticlimactic?

On the bus and later that evening when I was back in my hotel room I kept thinking about why I didn’t feel something or anything when I went into the empty tomb of Jesus? What was I expecting to feel or think or sense? And then it suddenly came to me – what I was feeling (or not feeling) was the whole reality of the Holy Sepulchre. The tomb was empty! Jesus is not dead nor is He alive and residing in empty tombs and the historical places in the Holy Land to greet visitors and tourists with a nice emotion. He is alive and has been these two millennia since He rose from the death that humans had laid on Him through torture, humiliation, scourging and crucifixion. He is present to the pilgrim who searches for Jesus, not only in holy sites in holy places but wherever they are, wherever they live and especially in the situations of life through which they seek Him. He IS present when we come together in His name, most especially at Mass when He comes under the appearance of bread and wine in His own Body and Blood.

WE ARE MEANT TO EXPERIENCE JESUS

For some or perhaps even many who are Christians the reality of this world is that religion is something we humans do on our part to create a structure for our belief in God. We haven’t experienced nor do we think we are meant to experience the real presence of God in this world. Our faith, in this sense, is our belief in the God we hope to see in the life that will follow this one. Frankly, nothing could be farther from the truth. We are meant to experience Jesus in this life. We are meant to feel His presence particularly at

times when we are not hyped up emotionally. God so often comes to us and will come to us in the quiet, when and often where we least expect to find Him. Like the time in grade one when I blurted out to my classmates and Sr. Mary Jacqueline that “I would like to be a priest” when I grew up. Unbeknownst to my teacher or the others in the room, those words I had just said led to to a most awesome experience: my heart began to pound in my chest as if I’d just been running and I had this wonderful sensation as though I was being filled with cotton candy! That, I know, was a beautiful, personal experience of the Living God who by the prompting of the Holy Spirit was saying to me, this little six-year-old boy in St. John the Evangelist school in Whitby, that the words I had so innocently just uttered were God’s will for me. Of course, in grade one I couldn’t nor was I meant to understand the full impact of what this would mean for my life. That would unfold in the months and years to come, especially when I sought to go my own way.



I have always had a strong sense that what we see with our eyes and hear with our ears is only a small part of what really is taking place when we celebrate the Mass. We see one another, the actions of altar servers and ushers, the sound of the choir and music ministry and the words and actions of the priest. And since they are the same each week we may be led to assume that this is the same

normal act of ‘going to Mass’ we experience each week. The saints tell us, however, that the angels explode in movement and the praise of Jesus when the consecration takes place at Mass. The sound of their praise is almost deafening in its beauty and power for the Real Presence of Jesus to come in the midst of His people gathered in His name, doing that very thing He instructed them to do the night before He died: “Do this in memory of me”.

For 2000 years now the Church has been doing that very thing – being faithful to not the suggestion but the command of the Lord Himself that we should present ourselves to the spiritual gifts He desires to give us. We might even be tempted to think that it is really no big deal if we miss Mass.

However, if we ‘miss’ Mass we are the ones who have been outdone by our own inaction for we have ‘missed’ by our own choice the meeting of mere man with the

transcendent reality of being in the presence of the Sovereign God of the Universe.

A week ago Saturday I had the opportunity to go and see the documentary film about Medjugorje entitled "Apparition Hill". The documentary followed several individuals who had responded to an invitation to go to the place where it is believed apparitions of the Blessed Mother have occurred for the past thirty-five years. People had been asked to submit a video of themselves explaining why they thought they should win the trip to this place of pilgrimage. Though the apparitions themselves have not been official approved by the Church, people are free to go there and to reap the benefits of prayer, confession, Mass and devotion.

At the conclusion of the receiving of the many hundreds of videos sent in seven complete strangers were chosen to go to this small town in Bosnia-Herzegovina: two atheists, one believer, a mother of four struggling with cancer, a man from Nova Scotia with ALS, a struggling addict and a woman questioning her faith. The beautiful documentary follows them from their leaving home and arrival at Medjugorje to their day-to-day experience of this place of pilgrimage. One of the several parts of the movie was the witness of a highly qualified medical doctor who related in the movie how she was asked to go to Medjugorje and observe the children (at the time the apparitions began) to see if they were legitimate or if she thought the whole thing was a hoax. What was remarkable to me about her story was not what she saw but what she didn't see that impacted her and made her no longer a skeptic but a believer in the apparitions.



The doctor related how she got permission to ask one of the seers, Marjana, whether she could touch the Blessed Mother when she next appeared. Marjana said she would ask Our Lady and Mary gave her permission. The doctor asked the seer where she should extend her hand in order to touch the Mother of God, and the seer indicated right directly in front of her. When the doctor extended her hand outward she suddenly was confronted with a great spiritual absence. It was as if the reality of the holy presence she could not see had simply yet profoundly removed herself from the doctor. The doctor related that she was left with a great sense of "Who did I think I was that I could demand such a thing,

that I should touch the Blessed Mother?" She felt her nothingness in the presence of that which was so beyond her and this world. That, I believe, is the Real Presence of the invisible God we are meant to **must** come to know. (FC)

Mass Intentions for the Week

Tue, Apr 18	8:30 a.m.	Robert St. Denis
Wed, Apr 19	7:00 p.m.	Confirmation
Thu, Apr 20	8:30 a.m.	Int of Margaret Forget
Fri, Apr 21	8:30 a.m.	Valerie Hotner +
Sat, Apr 22	5:00 p.m.	Maria & Attilio Tuzi
Sun, Apr 23	9:00 a.m.	Frank Mihelcic +
	11:00 a.m.	Divina Ziccarelli +
	1:00 p.m.	First Communion



Many persons love you,

Many people like you,

But ther is only one

Who **DIED** for you...That is

JESUS CHRIST

Wishing you a Blessed Easter!

The Parish Staff



LEO'S LUNCH

Please save the date - **Monday, April 24 at 12:30**. Tickets just \$15 per person, available by calling 905-620-0724 or dshaddick@sympatico.ca Why not invite a friend to join you!

12 HOURS OF PRAYER FOR PALLIATIVE CARE

The CWL of Canada calls all people of faith to join nationwide in **12 hours of Prayer for Palliative Care** on May 4, 2017 as a profound witness to the sanctity of human life. All parishioners, family and friends are invited to join St. Leo's Parish in prayer and solidarity any time between 8:30 a.m. and 8:30 p.m. at the church. For more information, please contact Cathy Duncan 905-430-1075 or Peter Hupka 905-666-5610. Those unable to attend are encouraged to join in prayerful support. A detailed schedule for the day will follow at the end of April.

VOCATION SEEDS


"He has been raised from the dead!" Through our baptism He calls us to proclaim new life to the world. Pray for those who herald the Good News as priests, deacons, brothers or sisters.




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