

St. Leo The Great

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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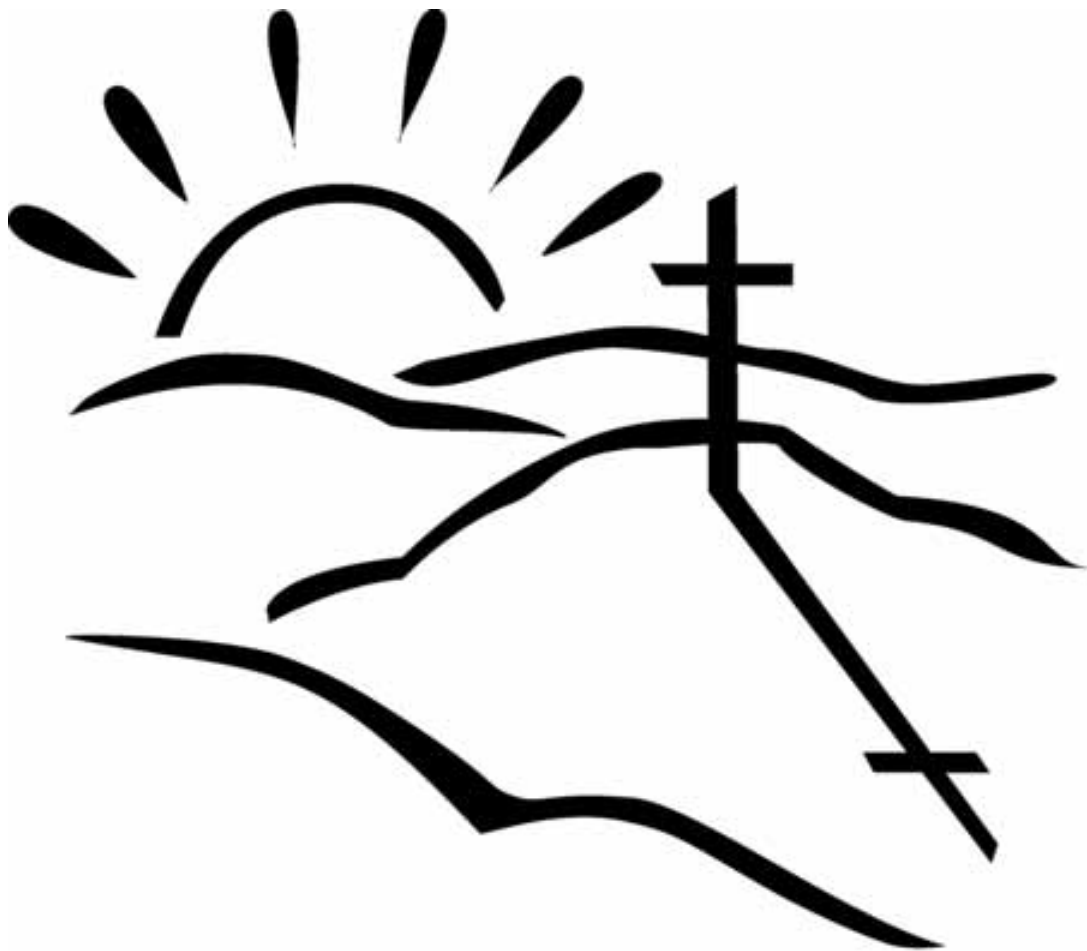
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Rejoice!

For the Lord is truly risen!

EASTER



I remember the Easter Sunday's of my youth as times of sunshine, spring, going to Mass. Easter Sunday morning awakened to a keen sense that something drastically different had taken place and our parish was

celebrating it. People arrived at church and disembarked their cars dressed differently, in brighter colours than I had seen them wear all winter and women were wearing bright hats as were some of the young girls - some even from my class at school!

Upon entering the church there was organ music playing and our usual Sunday arrival (all nine of us children and my parents) was met with an unusual sense of joy and bright whispers as people greeted one another and made their way to their pews. The bustle of a gathering church was highlighted with the smell and sight of flowers and a hint in the air of incense from the vigil the night before.

From the opening hymn with its 'Alleluia's', the singing of the Gloria not heard since Holy Thursday and the wonderful gospel stories recounting Jesus' resurrection, one knew clearly and strikingly that this was a parish in a Church that was proclaiming the Lord risen indeed!

They say that you never forget anything you feel and I remember so well the warmth of feeling I had as a child recalling Jesus' rising from the dead. Of course, since that awesome moment when the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from death to life, the best that the followers of Jesus have been able to do is to remember it and to look back on this great and mysterious event with a real sense of "what does it all mean and what does it mean for me, for us, now? What is the meaning of saying today that Jesus has risen from the dead?"

I think back to about nine years ago as I was busily packing for a trip to Lourdes, France, with a group traveling to that famous place of pilgrimage, prayer and healing. As I was dashing about the rectory making ready for my imminent departure, the emergency pager went off. I remember thinking "Not now! I'm trying to get out of here and I've got a plane to catch!" I answered the page to discover that the call was regarding a couple who had just lost their child who was stillborn and were requesting to see a priest. The sad event brought about a 'smarten up' sense within me as I quickly counted my own blessings and as I drove, turned my thoughts toward this unknown couple I would soon meet at the hospital.

When I made it to the maternity floor there were some arriving expectant mothers with bags and husbands in tow rambling towards rooms made ready for them. I searched for the room of the couple I had come to see and finally found it. The door was only slightly open and I noticed a butterfly had been placed on

the door - a sign to visitors and staff that a woman inside that room had lost a child. I drew in a breath and gently pushed on the door and entered the room to the muffled sounds of a woman crying. I whispered a "hello" to alert them that they had a visitor and was then greeted by the husband and father. "Thank you for coming", he said. I was introduced to his wife who limply touched my hand in the midst of her own sorrow and ever so slightly smiled at me, sitting up in her chair.

In the face of loss and sorrow there is not much one can say or should say for words just don't cut it when it comes to the indescribable. I fumbled in my own mind searching for words that would fit or comfort but none of them made it to my lips and voice. Being present was the greatest thing that I could offer and even at that I felt awkward and in the way. Finally after a few moments I asked them if they would like me to pray and they nodded their agreement. I asked whether the baby was a boy or girl and they told me, "A boy." In the silence of that room on a gloriously sunny spring day we bowed before the Father of all and sent a little baby who had been earth bound for a time in another direction. We prayed and sent him to God. This mother who had been waiting so long for her child to arrive was now tearfully and prayerfully, with her husband, bidding him farewell and good-bye. I stayed with them for a short while, then departed, assuring them I would remember their little boy in Lourdes in the village of St. Bernadette. I went to Lourdes where I prayed, walked, reflected, did the tourist thing now and then, and remembered that little boy we sent to God in prayer. I thought about that couple and the pain they must have been feeling, mindful that God never closes a door without opening a window.

God changes without changing. The following year the RCIA process began once again in our parish and this year in larger numbers than ever before. In all thirty-nine people accompanied by thirty-nine sponsors had been preparing for either baptism or reception into the Church along with full initiation.

According to the grace of God the woman I had visited in the hospital was now among those who were seeking baptism into the Church. Her husband would be her sponsor.

One Saturday morning, exactly one year after their baby's death, my priest associate and I met the couple and a relative at the cemetery where their baby was buried. Garret's grave had a new head stone the couple wanted blessed and we commended the child to God once again mindful that we never lose anything we give to the Lord. And the following Saturday night at the Easter Vigil, Garret's mother became a member of the Church - baptized, confirmed and fed with the body and blood of Jesus. She would now live, along with her husband, as she had never lived before, a child of God on earth who had a child of God in heaven.

This story deserves telling and is only remarkable and meaningful because, in fact, Jesus did rise from the dead! His rising has changed forever our notions surrounding human bodily death for we live in the sure and certain hope that we will live with Jesus forever. Over the years countless numbers of husbands and wives have lost their beloved spouses, their parents, their children, and those who loved and were loved, to what we

commonly call "death" or with words intended to soften that terrible separation of us from those we so sadly miss and mourn. Resurrection means that we are separated only for a time - from friends, from family, from Jesus. Yet we walk with him now in ways far beyond the memories we hold dear of those who have died, for he is not only risen, but is, as Christmas recalled, "with us". This annual Feast, the greatest of all feasts of the Church, is to make us recall and renew our faith in the power of that rising that changed our living, our death, for ever. Our lives are to be lived in such a way that everything in our being lives for and longs for.... **JESUS CHRIST WHO IS RISEN!** (Fr. Charles)

Rising & Bread

In the gospel read on Easter Sunday morning where Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb and finds it empty, she meets a stranger, whom she thinks is the gardener, and asks him where they have taken the body of the Lord. She presumes his body is dead but missing. And then Christ speaks her name: "Mary!", and suddenly she recognizes who it is speaking to her – it is the Lord!

Mary then attempts to do what any one of us would do if we were to see someone we had known was dead, standing there right in front of us, alive. She moved towards him to embrace him.

That would have seemed to have been a normal enough thing for her to do given the situation, but quite unexpectedly, our Lord, who is always loving, compassionate, and desirous of being close, repels Mary with words that, perhaps we've never really given a great deal of thought: **"Do not touch me yet, for I have not yet ascended to my Father."**

Jesus was giving his Church a message, not only the one of the Resurrection to be told by Mary to the other disciples, but a message about Eucharist. **There would be a new way of touching the Lord, in his Body and his Blood in the Eucharist!** Blessed Easter! (Fr. Charles)

PARISH WEEKLY COLLECTION UPDATE:

LAST SUNDAY'S OFFERTORY COLLECTION

- Envelopes, Loose bills and change - \$4528
- Pre-Authorized Giving (PAP) - \$1962 (March)

➔ TOTAL COLLECTION LAST WEEK: \$6490

MASS INTENTIONS

Tues., Apr. 22 – 8:30 am – For the intentions of Madelaine Vonk
 Wed., Apr. 23 – 7:00 pm – For the intentions of the Durham Region –
 Catholic Women's League
 Thurs., Apr. 24 – 8:30 am – The Felix Family+ Req. by Madge St. Denis
 Fri., Apr. 25 – 8:30 am – In Honour of the Divine Mercy
 Req. by the Figuracion Family
 Sat., Apr. 26 – 5:00 pm – Avery Butler+ Req. by the Butler Family
 Sun., Apr. 27 – 9:00 am – Paul Ponce de Leon+ Req. by Gladys & Family
 Sun., Apr. 27 - 11:00 am – For the intentions of John vander Wyst
 Req. by Mary Franssen

REMINDER – "BUNDLE SUNDAY" ON SAT., APRIL 26 (4 PM TO 6 PM) AND SUNDAY, APR. 27 (8:30 AM TO 1 PM). TRUCK IN PARISH PARKING LOT.

PARISH OFFICE IS CLOSED ON EASTER MONDAY, APRIL 21st. HOWEVER, BAPTISM INSTRUCTION CLASS WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY EVENING AT 7 PM IN THE PARISH HALL.

Easter Sunday – April 20, 2014 Working wonders in our livelihoods...

"The services provided by ShareLife agencies are lifesaving and life-restoring to those who regularly rely on them. Families are working through crises and are healing. People with developmental challenges are supported as they experience a sense of self-worth and fulfillment in their daily activities. Seniors are living independently, with access to the care and services they need. Refugees and new Canadians are guided toward a stable, productive livelihood in their newfound home. Sometimes the results are obvious and sometimes they're invisible but, always, they make a tangible difference.

(Thomas Cardinal Collins, Archbishop of Toronto)

Next ShareLife Sunday – May 4, 2014

Please give generously. You can work wonders!

The C.W.L. are asking for parish support for their Fashion Show on April 27. All Canadian clothes made right in Markham. Partial proceeds going to Rose of Durham and St. Vincent de Paul. Show starts at 1:00 pm. Lunch will be served and lots of door prizes. Bring a friend and have a ladies day out. No tickets available during Holy Weekend. Call 905-620-0724. **WE** need your support to keep things working in the parish.

CATECHIST CORNER

I have heard that it is not necessary to go to confession at least once a year. Is that correct?

Answer: No.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church in paragraph 1457 states: According to the Church's command, "after having attained the age of discretion, **each of the faithful is bound by an obligation faithfully to confess serious sins at least once a year.**" Anyone who is aware of having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion, even if he experiences deep contrition, without having first received sacramental absolution, unless he has a grave reason for receiving Communion and there is no possibility of going to confession. Children must go to the sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion for the first time.

Catholic Education Week is in May. Our faith-based schools are an extension of our homes and our teachers, like our children need our support and prayers. The CWL of St. Leo the Great parish continues to support our local schools by offering a spiritual bouquet so teacher's know their community is behind them. Please consider offering your prayers, masses and sacrifices for those who partner with us in the education of our children's faith. A spiritual bouquet sign-up sheet is in the vestibule. Please take a moment to sign the bouquet.


Garage Sale Bazaar – Come out to our first ever garage sale bazaar, hosted by the Columbian Squires, on May 10, 2014. You can rent a table for \$5, plus \$20 deposit to sell your items and all profits are yours. Contact Jens Dekker (905-666-7592) or Erik Dekker (erik.dekker.kofc@gmail.com) for more details.




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