

An Easter message from Father Garry

Most mornings I run on the Trolley trail, which is close to my house. It passes by a Presbyterian church in the neighborhood. As I ran past the church the other day, I noticed two plastic buckets, one on either side of the trail. One had palms in it, with a sign that invited people to take one to use to celebrate Palm Sunday. The other bucket had long stemmed carnations in it, with a sign that invited people to take one for their Easter celebration. I am guessing that the church had ordered these things, especially the palms, long before the Coronavirus hit, and now was giving them away because all religious services had been cancelled.

It struck me that this simple act of finding an alternative way of distributing these Holy Week symbols represents what Easter is all about. Like all of our lives, that church's Holy Week plans have been turned upside down by the need for people to "shelter in place." But regardless of the chaos, fear, disruption, and social isolation, this church found a way to express faith in the Paschal Mystery – that death always gives way to new life.

The Coronavirus has entombed all of us in some way. Maybe my tomb is loneliness because of the need for social distancing. Maybe it is fear of catching the disease. Maybe it is anxiety and worry for loved ones. Maybe it is the threat of financial devastation. Maybe it is the grief and heartache of witnessing the thousands of deaths caused by the virus. Like Jesus, we did not choose the tomb in which we find ourselves.

Easter is the proclamation that the tomb cannot imprison Life. Each year we repeat the story of the stone being rolled away from the tomb and Jesus rising to new life. As Easter people, we believe that our tombs, whatever they are, cannot stop New Life from bursting forth in us also. As the church mentioned above found a way to let life peek out from the darkness of its situation, we also may have to be imaginative midwives in finding ways to give birth to new life. But we have to believe we can make new life happen.

We have all seen and experienced life happening despite the death-dealing effects of the Coronavirus. We have connected with loved ones via phone

and computer to maintain the life of relationships. We have witnessed people risking their own health in order to provide necessary services to others. We have seen various organizations helping those who have been financially hurt because of job loss. There are many more examples. As Easter people, we do not just helplessly stand by, hoping that God will bring new life from the tomb. We bring this life forth in all kinds of ways. It takes trust, imagination, hard work, and sacrifice. But above all, it takes faith in the promise that God will do God's part as we do ours.

Blessings, Fr. Garry

Easter 2020