

Easter homily

HE IS RISEN! (HE IS TRULY RISEN!)

5719 is a key number for you to remember 5719

Scripture says, early morning that first Easter Sunday

The women arrived at the tomb.

And to their amazement, the stone had been rolled back!

There is no doubt about the Lord's resurrection.

He had been crucified;

- **he was surely dead;**
- **a seal had been put on the large stone sealing off his tomb.**
- **guards had been posted outside.**

However, that first Easter morning, the massive stone has been pushed aside.

His garments are folded up in a corner;

If someone had wanted to steal a body, they would not have left his clothes behind which were wrapped around his body. They would have carried the corps away in them.

For the women at the tomb, there is no doubt.

He is risen! He is truly risen!

And if someone still had doubt that he was risen,
what other explanation is there for the radical change of the disciples
in the days after his rising?

They who were huddled up in locked room after his death.

Then suddenly they are in the streets of Jerusalem preaching the good
news that Jesus is risen!

They began a chorus of witnesses which reaches down to this day.

Over 2 billion Christians proclaim today that **Jesus is risen**, He is truly
risen!

The challenge today is not believing in that Jesus is risen.

That the massive stone which held him bound in the grave had indeed
been rolled back.

The challenge today is believing that that the massive stones
which block us from new life can be moved.

Who can move us from inner darkness to light? (Creation story from
the book of Genesis)

Jesus is our Light.

Who can free us from whatever binds our spirit? (Exodus)

Jesus is our freedom.

We who form a joyful band of missionary disciples are called to be witnesses that Jesus lives TODAY. The power of his risen life is overcoming the inner darkness which binds our spirits and our world. We see it happening all around us if we just open our eyes.

For example, look at the City of Detroit

No doubt about the rebirth of the Downtown and Midtown areas of the city. Areas of Detroit are resurrecting.

Buildings are being filled; jobs are being created; people are moving in.

Yet downtown and midtown seems so far away from OUR part of town.

The question is; How can we move the stone away which blocks new life from returning to our neighborhoods, our streets, our households, our souls? How do we proclaim that the Lord is risen and with us today?

That is where the number 5719 comes into play.

Four years ago along with Colleen Flaherty, I came to the parish council and asked for funds to support the founding of O'Hair Park Community Association, a square mile neighborhood organization which would surround the church facility. The parish made a commitment of \$30,000 and I then recruited the active involvement of ten parishioners.

That's where the number, 5719, comes into play. In this past year alone, with the active participation of 150 neighbors, a host of volunteers have come forth to invest 5719 hours of labor and love to help this neighborhood come to new life. We have a long way to go, but much is being done to raise up the hope of a community.

Abandoned houses have been boarded up and torn down, The 80 acre park cleaned up and now used again for community engagement. 25 block captains are now active.

One of the neighbors who is actively involved in O'Hair Park organization... someone who classifies herself as a non-believer... checked this week to find out the time of Easter services...not for her (yet) but for a friend who is Catholic and is overcoming a depression with the loss of her mother. She is hoping that the life she has seen

coming from this community of faith can lift her friend from her sadness and find new life and inner peace.

As we reach out into our neighborhood, we proclaim, **He is risen!** He is truly...

Yet, this is only one example of how we witness to the risen Lord in our midst. Nearly 20 years ago, one of the members of our parish who was born in Haiti and her husband had a vision of establishing a clinic in a town in Haiti which had no medical care for the poor. Today, a clinic with full time staff is there.

A crew from a number of Catholic, Anglican and Baptist churches goes down yearly to Haiti to assist with serving the medical needs in the outlying villages. In fact, they leave again for their annual trip this coming Friday.

As they go out to an economically oppressed people, they proclaim, **He is Risen!**

Then again, for almost twenty years, a group from St. Alexander's Parish, many who now call Corpus Christi their home, joined many other Christian churches to travel down in the poor areas of the

Southern United States in a Work Camp to lift up the spirits and service the needs of those who have no one else.

As they go out, they proclaim: **He is risen!**

In many other ways, day by day, we, each and every one of us, reach out to witness that Jesus is risen and with us. That is why we take 50 days to celebrate Easter. We need such a long season to let the power of the risen Lord overcome whatever gloom may overwhelm our spirits and that we may break free of the bonds which hold us captive.

(PAUSE)

I encourage you during this Easter season of fifty days, **Just Try Jesus! Just try his way of living.**

I suggest two things we can do during this or the Easter season

- 1. Adopt some kind of daily prayer to be in contact with the Risen Lord (six minutes a day booklet)**
- 2. Join us for the weekly gathering for prayer (as his first disciples did).**

Just four years ago 5719 seemed like an impossible number of volunteer hours to accomplish in our neighborhood. But the stone has been rolled away!

Many of our personal and social challenges which can overwhelm us and hold our spirits captive.

I encourage you. JUST TRY JESUS, and then let the power of the Risen Lord take over your life.

For I proclaim with you today: HE IS RISEN!