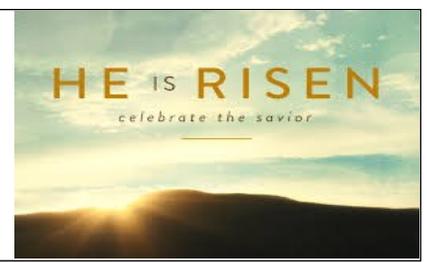




The Easter Message 2018

*Happy Easter, brothers and sisters
in the Risen Lord!*



Think about it, the Easter story is something that no one had imagined, anticipated or expected to happen in realism. Because It does not fit into anyone's sense of what is likely to happen after someone died. Moreover, there is no doubt that someone crucified by the Romans will escape death. So it defied all human reasoning that such person was now alive again body and soul. Very enigmatic story, isn't it?

Our own days are witnessing a kind of faintness and relativist skepticism that go all out to cast a shadow on Easter and its transforming power. Yet, there is no doubt that many people believe that Christ truly rose from the dead. There is tons of evidence from the life of the Apostles and of the early Church that vindicates our belief in Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Very potent and irresistible evidence is found in the transformed lives of Jesus disciples. Men and women, who were capricious and fraught with trepidation, uncharacteristically were emboldened and zealously proclaimed the Risen Christ in the streets of the Holy Land and beyond.

Friends, here is the deal: At Easter we celebrate THE ONE breathtaking and irresistible Truth, "***Christ is risen from the dead***". It is that resurrection story that ignited the faith of a few disinclined folks and bring to birth the electrified early Church. Easter is that one event that blew apart all the historical expectations and underlying principles of the Jewish people immemorial. I must say, this is the faith that sent the first disciples like Peter and Paul scoring across the world, filled with unprecedented excitement, and even to their deaths. This is the same event that empowered the ancient missionaries to soar through the

turbulent oceans to evangelize the land we merrily call home today. Isn't it astonishing that these folks gave up everything and went to their deaths defending this very enigmatic message?

Dear people of Christ, our forty days desert exploration and pondering on the Christ paschal mystery should afford us with new vision and embolden us with power and strength to celebrate this Easter as transformed people ready to conquer the world for Christ. Certainly, we can see that the resurrection of Jesus is never only to comfort, assure or convince us alone. Beyond that, it is a trigger for mission and a call to die with Christ and to rise with him in Glory.

No matter the nature of your individual life experience or stories, the resurrection of Jesus assures each of us that our future can be different, beautiful and glorious. If we allow ourselves to be transformed by the Easter mystery, we will notice the stone in our life being rolled away. We may not find that all our problems will suddenly vanish, but we will find hope and vanquishing spirit to endure.

Friends in Christ, this is Easter for us, and this is the one irresistible story and the one irrefutable truth that has gathered us here today. This is the one message that will keep our hearts burning within us, until like our ancestors in faith; we are overtaken with unprecedented excitement even unto our final days.

A Blessed Easter to each of you!

Fr. James M. Ekeocha