

Homily Easter Vigil 2018

The Gospel described the visit of the women to the burial place of Jesus. The first thing they noticed was the stone, rolled away. It meant they would not have to roll it away in order to minister the remains of Jesus. But for a moment they must have wondered who had moved the stone. But soon they were amazed to find someone else, a young man, alive, in a white robe. But very quickly the young man told them, in the simplest of terms, "He is not here." But He also noted that Jesus had been raised and was going to Galilee where they would see Him in person.

Tonight, we celebrate the fact that Jesus who had been crucified did not remain in the tomb. We also celebrate that after going to Galilee He would after 40 days ascend into His rightful place in heaven from where He would send the Holy Spirit so that His presence, the presence of God, could continue to do His work on earth. For nearly two thousand years Jesus as continued to be present, to be seen, to be experienced, to be here, in a very personal way through His Church.

Tonight, we celebrate that Jesus is here among us now. He will exercise His ministry of rebirth in baptism and His sending of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation. He will offer Himself as divine food to two new members of the Church as well. All of us will be called upon to renew our baptismal promises. In that we recall what happened to us some years ago, in the words of St. Paul in our Epistle, when we were baptized into the death of Jesus so that we could be raised into a newness of life. We know that the old self that died in baptism continues to tempt us to try to walk apart from Jesus, but we continue to resist.

While we renew our baptismal promises in a solemn way tonight, through a series of questions and answers and the sprinkling of water, we will do so again in Holy Communion. Every Holy Communion is a renewal of our baptism. Every Holy Communion is an acknowledgement that Jesus died for me, He has risen and so can continue to lift me up, not just at Easter but in every Mass, in every Holy Communion, when He feeds me, nourishes me, strengthens me with His Body and Blood.