

My dear Parishioners, Welcome to this Easter!

Our Lent started with the Gospel passage of the temptations of Jesus in the desert that taught us to be faithful to the Father, to His Word and His Grace; to be faithful to Him. This year; whatever uncertainties and fears we are living with in our world today; our Lord Jesus has invited us to remain in the God of Life. Easter is the celebration of that God of Life and is not just celebrated for one day only. Easter is celebrated for fifty glorious days beginning today and culminating on the Solemnity of Pentecost. Easter is the “Mother of all Feasts” because we remember the great love of the Father for us, whose Son, Jesus Christ, by dying destroyed death and by rising restored all of us to Life. This is the feast of the Passover of the Lord; the new day; the new creation; the new life. Easter reminds us that there is light ahead of us and darkness and fears can be left behind. This Easter should also remind us of the beginnings of the Church when the disciples were still hiding for fear of persecution and uncertainty about life, but the Risen Lord was calling them out to meet Him again in Galilee. Therefore, this Easter challenges us to continue what Jesus taught His disciples and to live by His example. It teaches us to take courage that despite whatever we face in our world, the Risen Lord Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is more present and active in our lives than ever. Let us allow Jesus Christ to live in us that Risen Life for which He came to save us!

On the Easter Vigil, we recalled God’s story – which is also in our story of salvation. The liturgy of the Word re-enacts that story and we joyfully celebrate the Risen Lord in our midst as He offers Himself anew in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, especially as we receive our Blessed and Holy Communion. We do this in a spirit of thanksgiving to God who gives His own Son to die in order to rescue us from the slavery of sin and death and fear. I invite you; may we live as people deeply touched by the resurrection and proclaim: Christ is Risen, Alleluia! May our spiritual encounter with the Risen Lord on our journey of faith touch us deeply and transform us as He did for His Disciples. Let us take a bit more time for personal reflection, more time for our families at home, our neighbors, our co-workers and our fellow students.

May the resurrection lead us to be the best version of ourselves; committed to live out our Baptismal promises that we have just renewed.

When we live the new life of the Jesus’ Resurrection, where we are, we do become the best version of ourselves. I invite you to become what St Augustine referred to as an “Easter People”, a people transformed into disciples and stewards who commit to give their lives in witness to draw others into His Love and Kingdom. My prayer for you this Easter is that you live as people deeply touched by the Resurrection and proclaim that: *Christ is Risen, Alleluia, Alleluia!*

-Fr. Rafael Hinojosa, St. Anthony Church, Oakley, CA April 2022 Easter Message

BLESSED AND HAPPY EASTER IN THE JOY OF OUR RISEN SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST! *With Love*
Fr. Jim!