

## **Easter Homily By Father Hugo L. Blotsky, O.S.B. April 12, 2020**

My wish for each and every one of you is a blessed and Holy Easter.

My prayer for you this Easter has been and will be that the Lord richly bless you and your loved ones as we continue our pilgrimage towards Heaven, especially while on this rocky road through the present health crisis in our country and around the world.

I am offering two Easter Masses, one last evening and the Easter Sunday Mass. The intention at each of these Masses is for all living and deceased parishioners, relatives, friends, and benefactors.

We want to join the more than 1.2 billion Catholics around the world as they gather to celebrate Easter with Masses in many different languages, besides English.

We pray for them and they in turn are praying for you and for me.

We celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus' rising from the dead on the third day after His Crucifixion which took place 2,000 years ago.

Jesus was condemned to death for saying that He was the Son of God and the King of the Jews. He was led through the streets of Jerusalem carrying a cross up to Mount Calvary to be nailed to the cross, which was the punishment of a common criminal.

Jesus had been sent on earth by God the Father to win Eternal Salvation for all humanity; for all humans born from the beginning of time and all those to be born until the end of time. Jesus willingly took our sins upon Himself, suffering persecution, rejection, and condemnation. His death was a scandal to many. The Jews wanted a leader who would defeat their enemies, not someone who would be killed by His enemies, especially not be killed by crucifixion, as that was the punishment for common criminals.

At first, the crucifixion of Jesus seemed to be a sign of total failure of His mission in life, and the end of His following.

All that changed when Jesus rose from the dead. He had prophesied that He would rise from the dead. At first the Apostles didn't believe Mary Magdalen and other women who came to report that they had seen the Risen Lord Jesus.

Only after the Risen Jesus appeared to the Apostles in a room where the doors were locked for fear of the Jews did they begin to believe in His Resurrection.

After His Resurrection, Jesus came to comfort and to console His disciples with words of assurance that He did not abandon them. His first words to the apostles were, "Do not be afraid." The apostles were afraid because their Master, Teacher, and Leader was killed. They feared for their own lives. Jesus assured them that He was with them in His glorified body.

Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit who would empower them with all the grace they needed to carry on the work of the Risen Lord Jesus. The disciples were not to fear for their lives because Jesus was giving them the power and grace to face persecution and death for the cause of Christ.

When Jesus suffered His Passion and Death, He suffered for you and for me also. He had taken our sins upon Himself to suffer for us so that He could win eternal salvation for us. No sin was too great for Jesus to conquer. Through His Passion, Death and Resurrection, Jesus won victory over all sin, evil, death, and the power of Satan.

During these last several years, I spent much time reflecting on the meaning of Jesus having paid the price for our sins on the Cross and Jesus having won Eternal Salvation for each and every one of us.

Any and all sins that you and I commit belong to the Risen Lord Jesus, He paid the price for them. I need to turn over my sins to the Risen Jesus by confessing them, repenting of my sins, asking for His forgiveness, and pledging to try to avoid committing those same sins again.

The Risen Jesus wants to forgive us our sins as we repent and take away all the guilt and shame of our sins. He wants to give us His mercy and compassion. If the Risen Jesus didn't want to give us His mercy and compassion, then His Passion, Death and Resurrection would have been a total waste.

If I refuse to repent of my sins and I hang on to the guilt and shame from my sins, I am not able to receive the freedom that the Lord Jesus intended for me. His forgiveness is intended to give us new life. Jesus said that He came so that you and I might have abundant life.

If I hang on to my sins, these sins can cause me to become spiritually sick, and likely even physically sick.

Never again will Jesus need to shed another drop of blood to win our eternal salvation. His mission to save everyone from the beginning of time until the end of time was completed on the Cross. That is why Jesus uttered these words on the Cross before He died, "It is finished."

The Risen Lord Jesus won all the grace that you and I need to face our challenges, trials, and tribulations at the present time and in the future. His mercy and compassion are always available to us as we repent. None of us is able to out-sin the mercy and compassion of the Risen Lord Jesus.

We need to remind ourselves that the graces the Risen Lord Jesus won for us on the cross are available to each and every one of us as we work our way through the Corona virus crisis. We are not alone. Do not be afraid.

We have the promise of the Risen Lord Jesus that the gates of hell shall never prevail against His Church. His Church will be persecuted and attacked. The forces of evil will try to destroy the Church and to weaken the influence and power of the Church. But the gates of hell will never win out in the battle against His Church.

Our battle is not against human forces but against Satan, the world of darkness, principalities and powers that want to tear down the Kingdom of God here on earth.

The first words that the Risen Lord Jesus spoke to His frightened Apostles that were locked in the room for fear of the Jews are the same words that the Risen Lord Jesus wants you and me to hear coming from His mouth, "Do not be afraid."

As we look around us today, we find that there are many negative things going on that could tempt us to become discouraged, and even to question whether God exists. "Do not be afraid."

Wherever evil exists, the grace of God abounds. Sometimes, we need to walk in total darkness in order to see the light.

The first words of Jesus to His disciples after His Resurrection were, "Do not be afraid." These are the same words that the Risen Jesus would say to us if He were to appear to us in the Church or in our homes this Easter, "Do not be afraid."

The words of the Risen Lord to those who are facing illness or the death of a loved one are: Do not be afraid.

The words of the Risen Lord to those who have lost their job and are now facing financial difficulties are: Do not be afraid. Everything, and all things, are still in the hands of God.

The words of the Risen Lord to the people who are going through the breakup of a relationship, or those who fear the breakup of a relationship, are: Do not be afraid. In such times, the Lord wants our relationship with Him to become stronger.

The words of the Risen Lord to those who are afraid because God seems distant and doesn't seem to be answering their prayers, are: Do not be afraid. He is close to us. He is only a prayer away.

Sin and evil have been conquered through His death and Resurrection. Satan has been defeated. Jesus was sent into the world to save the world, not to condemn the world. There is hope, there is healing. God is in control of all situations in the world. We have nothing to worry about. "Do not be afraid."