

Sunday Message

EASTER SUNDAY

THE WORD

Year A • 9 April 2023 • Colour: White • Psalter Week 1



I love telling jokes on Easter Sunday, and there's an excellent reason for it.

It is in keeping with an ancient tradition in the Russian Orthodox Church, where the day after Easter was devoted to telling jokes. They even told jokes in church. But why? It was their way of celebrating the great cosmic joke God pulled on Satan in the resurrection. Satan thought he had won. Satan was sure the forces of darkness had prevailed. He was confident that with the death of Jesus, all hope was lost, that God's plan for humanity was destroyed. And so Satan smiled to himself and was smug in his victory. Satan had the last word, the last laugh.

So he thought.

Then something extraordinary happened. God raised Jesus from the dead – and life, hope, and salvation became the last words. Life and hope and salvation replaced death and despair, and darkness. As St John says: "Christ's is a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could never overpower." And so the whole world, heaven and earth, rejoiced at the devil's discomfort.

That's why the Orthodox Russians tell jokes on Easter Day. And why we should rejoice and tell jokes too. Jesus, our brother, has broken the chains of death through the power of the Father. Death, the last and greatest enemy, has been overcome. Death has no more power over us.

Easter is the great feast of joy and demands a response from us. What should our response be?

First, to acknowledge it, let it sink in. We can be so familiar with the Easter story that it loses its impact. It's something we celebrate every year, just another date on the church calendar. We can get more emotional about a piece of music or a storyline in Eastenders than that God died and was raised for us. We can get more passionate about a football match than that we have been saved. Remember the mind-blowing truth we are celebrating this day. Remember and give thanks.

Second, the resurrection is proof of how much God loves us and believes in us. It tells us that hope has triumphed over despair, light over darkness, good over evil, life over death, love over hate. It reminds us that even though people and institutions let us down, God never lets us down; even though banks and governments fail us, God never fails us; even though the church can disappoint us, God never disappoints us.

No matter how old or young, strong or frail, agile or crippled, large or small, or wrinkled or fresh-faced we may be, God loves us and believes in us. No matter where we're from, what ethnicity we possess, or what our personal history is, God loves us and believes in us. The resurrection of Christ Jesus tells us God is on our side.

Imagine if we saw ourselves and saw each other the way God sees us; if we believed in ourselves and believed in each other the way God believes in us. If we did that, there would be no hatred, no wars, no bigotry, no discrimination, no tribalism, no intentional suffering. We would live as Easter people, people redeemed.

So make sure to tell jokes this day and sing alleluia. Let God's love shine in you. Let God's love radiate through you. We are an Easter people, and alleluia is our song. ■

REFLECT

In today's first reading, Peter proclaims the good news of the resurrection. It's an extraordinary change from only a short period before when he denied Jesus three times, and had locked himself behind closed doors, quivering in fear. Now Peter is on fire with faith. He preaches it to Cornelius, his household, and anyone who listens. He will even die for the sake of the Gospel. His belief in the resurrection has changed everything for him. How strong is your faith in the resurrection? Would you be prepared to die for it? ■

DO

When the apostles realised that Jesus had been raised from the dead, they hurried back to tell the others the astonishing news. They became, at that moment, witnesses to the Good News. We, too, are called to be witnesses to the Good News. How well and how boldly do you witness to the Gospel?

SAY

"We are an Easter people, and alleluia is our song."

PRAY

Pray for the community of believers worldwide that they may grow stronger in the faith. Pray especially for all those who were received into the Church this Easter.

LEARN

Today, we begin the Season of Easter, which will continue for fifty days until Pentecost. These fifty days are celebrated as one feast, the "Great Sunday." During these days, we celebrate the very basis of our faith – that God raised Jesus from the dead.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ means that death has no more hold over us.

Alleluia is our great Easter exclamation. The word itself is Hebrew and means 'Praise God'

May the peace of the risen Christ be in your homes and hearts this Easter day.

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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9th April 2023
EASTER SUNDAY

Weekend masses

Sat 6:00pm Dechomet 7:30pm Leitrim
Sun 9:00am Gargory 11:00am Dromara

There will be no mass Easter Mon, Tues nor Wed
Fri (14th) 7:30pm Dromara

I hope to have a few quiet days this week, but if there are any sick calls or deaths, I will return to the parishes.

Cemetery Sunday 21st May

Anniversaries

Dechomet

Sat 15th Patrick Hugh & Elizabeth Doyle

Leitrim

Sat 15th Hugh McAleenan (MM)
John & Agnes Boyd
Anna McAnulty
Patsy McAnulty
Margaret & Teresa Murphy

Dromara

Sun 9th Annie Gordon (Drumkerragh Rd)
Fri 14th Hugh Lavery (MM)
Sun 16th Gerry & Cissie O'Hare (Finnis)

The **Well** is a community wellness hub which supports a range of services to support mental health and emotional wellbeing. Their aim is to provide the right support to the right person at the right time.

T: (028) 4176 7272

E: hi@thewellhub.net

W: www.thewellhub.net

Dromore Diocesan Historical Society

Mon 17th Apr at 7:30pm the Society will host an illustrated talk by Jerome Mullen OBE GCM on "*Life and Death of a Vatican Diplomat: The Pain of a Brother's Loss*" in the Parish Centre, Newry. All welcome.

Lourdes 59 Club Winners

14th Jan No. 24 No winner
21st Jan No 18 D & G McCarney
28th Jan No. 25 No winner
4th Feb No. 56 Ethna McKay
11th Feb No.50 John McKay
18th Feb No. 29 LK & ED Burrows
25th Feb No. 35 Linley Hamilton
4th Mar No 7 Owen Kelly

Collections Parish	Dromara	Drumgooland
	£605	£1,976

Trócaire

Please return any donations, boxes or envelopes, to the churches over the coming weeks. If you wish to make a donation by cheque, please make the cheque out to the parish (either Dromara or Drumgooland) as it makes it easier for Trócaire if one transfer comes from the diocese.

The **new boxes of envelopes** begin this weekend, Thank You to all who helped distribute them. If anyone wishes to receive a box please let me know. If you wish to pay by standing order or direct debit, please email and the forms will be sent to you. Thank You to all who support the parishes and myself so generously.

We welcome into Drumgooland Parish Farrah Niamh Doyle and Lochlainn Alfie Joe McAlerney

Divine Mercy Sunday 16th Apr

Celebrated in the following churches:

Mary Mother of The Church, Saintfield,
St Catherine's Dominican Church, Newry,
St Peter's Cathedral, Belfast
St Paul's Church, Falls Road, Belfast.

All Masses at 3 pm, preceded by Divine Mercy Devotions and Confessions from 2pm (1:30pm in St. Paul's and 1:45pm in St. Catherine's)

Holy Land Pilgrimage

The Catholic Chaplaincy at Queen's University Belfast will lead a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land for QUB Alumni and Friends, departing 9th Feb 2024 for 8 nights with half-board accommodation. The Pilgrimage's Spiritual Director will be Queen's Chaplain, Fr Dominic McGrattan, with music and song provided by the Chaplaincy's Director of Sacred Music, celebrated soprano, Marcella Walsh. If you would like to know more, please email Chaplaincy Director, Shannon Campbell, at catholicchaplaincy@qub.ac.uk

SVDP: Drom 07738838191/Drumg 07825419067

Safeguarding Contact: P Carville 07789917741

Leitrim Cleaners Fri 14th Kathleen's Team