

Easter Sunday 2020
Mass Suspended due to Coronavirus
On-Line Homily
Acts:10.34,37-43///Col:3.1-4///Matthew 28.1-10

→the year was 1978...I had graduated high school in May and that following September I began my studies in the seminary.

→what was unusual about the summer and fall of 1978 was that Pope Paul VI died in August, John Paul I was elected in early September, and thirty days later, with much surprise, the Church was electing a pope all over again

→the white smoke above Saint Peter's announced in early October that another new pope had been chosen.

→he was from Poland, educated, vibrant...and with a vision for a new world, forged by the suffering of his native land.

→he would take the name John Paul II...and suddenly a cardinal, relatively unknown outside Catholic circles, was thrust into the center of a global stage.

→all the world waited to hear his first words, his first papal address...and the very first words the new Pope spoke in his **first** papal address to world were these..... "*Be not afraid*"

→they were great words then....and....they are great words now

→and ironically...the very first words spoken in today's gospel reading to Mary and Mary Magdalene as they arrived at the tomb of Jesus from the angel are exactly the same ...

"do not be afraid"

→[and] those are also the very same **first** words Jesus says as well... "*do not be afraid*"

→they are **the very same words** we, perhaps. have also been saying to one another and to ourselves each night over the past few weeks...as we continue to deal with these unusual circumstances.... *Do not be afraid*....

→on this special Easter Sunday, this truly is the message for us...because although Jesus knows how frightening life and death can be...he invites us today...to face our fears with the hope of Easter faith.

→certainly there are things to fear in this life and world...and we have all become painfully aware and reminded of that over the past month...but the command of the risen Lord is to step out beyond our fear...to rise above...and reenter life with a full heart of hope and courage.

→when you think about it...fear can make us withdraw from life...and left unchecked it can become the seedbed of many of our sins...

→what is cheating, but the fear of failure...

→what is lying, but the fear of getting caught..

→what is greed, but the fear of scarcity...

→of all our passions...*fear*...weakens our judgment the most...

→and so on this unusual Easter Sunday...how do we step beyond our **fear**....

→how can we emerge from the tomb of despair and uncertainty in these times we now are facing....

→we do so in the same way, Mary and Mary Magdalene, and countless of others have done throughout history, many of whom also faced despair and uncertainty...by *not being afraid!*

→Today, Christians around the world celebrate Easter...most definitely not in the way we are accustomed too or the way we want too...but what we celebrate is:

→that our life has meaning...because of Jesus Christ

→that our life is redeemed...because of Jesus Christ

→that our life has purpose...because of Jesus Christ

→**and**... that we should not be afraid...because of Jesus Christ.

→under these circumstances, this Easter challenges us to move from the FEARS we have to the LIFE offered to us by God

→that in spite of our sinfulness...and the darkness...and the uncertainty present in our world today....we need BELIEVE yet once again and to *not be afraid*.

→it has been said that all of us are formed by our past

...and, very often the fears of our past are what control us?

→but today...on Easter...Christ invites us to put all that behind us...to move away from our fears and to find new freedom

→we began this Lent with our theme *Lenten Blessings Await*

--it was quickly interrupted...and over the past few weeks we perhaps have wondered...what “blessings have there been”....what “blessings await us”

→ I believe our “**blessing**” has been the courage, strength, and desire in each of us to face this **fear** knowing that this too shall pass.

EASTER SUNDAY is good news for you and me.....

→urging us to move away from our fears to freedom...from the past to the future,
from winter to spring, from death to life

→Jesus invites us to come forth from this tomb into the light of his life...

→today is the day for us to realize that nothing can separate us from the love of
God and one another...not time....not space...not even a virus...

→God will always be faithful to you and me

→the message of Easter from the Lord...to the women who first saw him was to
pass along to the rest of us, disciples in hiding,...*do not be afraid... tell my disciples to go to
Galilee; there they will see me.*”

→to translate that message for us today...Jesus would be telling us... “there is too much
to do, too much for which to live...and too little reason to fear anything in life or in death...

→get up and live...and as you go through life...enduring whatever may come your
way...as you live and love....you will see me always and everywhere for I will be with you
forever....

→in simple words..... “*do...not...be...afraid*”.

