

Our Lady Help of Christians

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From the Desk of Father Dwayne

Easter 2021

HAPPY EASTER!

"This is the feast of the victory of our God, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia"

My brothers and sisters in Christ,

The above line is from a hymn that we sing in church on Easter Sunday.

However, I note that even before the first Easter Sunday and just before leaving the Last Supper, Mark tells us, "Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives" (Mark 14:26). As was the custom concluding the Passover meal, Jesus and His disciples sang songs of thanksgiving to God, even though Jesus was about to endure brutal torture and death on a cross.

At first glance, one might think it a bit misplaced to sing hymns of thanksgiving to God on the eve of imminent crucifixion at the hands of the Romans who specialized in such vicious executions. Why the song?

They sang for the same reason we sing today, over 2,000 years later. They sang because death was not about to conquer Jesus. Rather, Jesus was about to conquer death, forever and for all of us!

And indeed, the tomb was empty on that first Easter Sunday, the most significant turning point in the history of humanity. For each and every one of us who believes and seeks light rather than darkness, Jesus had purchased eternal life and "gave power to become children of God" (John 1:12). We now say with confidence in the Apostle's Creed, "I believe in ... the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting."

May we never forget that Jesus would do it all over again if only to save each one of us. As Pope Francis mentioned in his Palm Sunday homily this year, may we lift our eyes to the cross and receive the grace of amazement in realizing how much God loves us.

My brothers and sisters, I am so happy to be able to celebrate Easter with parishioners in church and online this year. I am grateful that, even during a pandemic, we have been able to connect with each other virtually with online Masses and numerous Lenten offerings on Zoom, such as Bible study, our retreat, book clubs, and the consecration to Saint Joseph.

Regarding Saint Joseph, Pope Francis declared this year, from the Immaculate Conception on December 8, 2020 until the same feast on December 8, 2021, to be the Year of Saint Joseph. He made this declaration on the 150th anniversary of the declaration of Saint Joseph as patron of the universal church by Blessed Pope Pius IX. I have special hope that this year, under the loving and watchful stewardship of Saint Joseph, our church pews will fill up once again and, one day soon, will be fuller than they have ever been. For we remember that the in-person Mass is the place that we can experience the gift of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

We look forward to welcoming our entire parish community back in person whenever everyone feels comfortable. We will continue to livestream the daily 12:00 Mass and Sunday 11:30 Mass, as well as special events. Let us remain united together in fervent daily prayer as a parish community wherever we are, whether online or at live Masses. We remain committed to serving parishioners online and in person, and growing in faith together as a parish community.

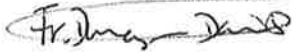
Finally, let me note that I am always overwhelmed by your generosity with your time, talent and treasure, which our parish needs now more than ever. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

On behalf of the priests and staff of Our Lady Help of Christians, I wish you and your families a Happy and Blessed Easter! I pray that God will continue to bless you with health and happiness always, and that the risen Lord will fill your hearts with peace and joy.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, pray for us.

Our Lady Help of Christians, pray for us.

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Dwayne".

Fr. Dwayne