

Easter Sunday: April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Dear Parishioners of St. Philip the Apostle Parish,

Speaking on behalf of your hard-working parish staff, finance council, and our many volunteers, we wish you a truly joyous and holy Easter. Reflecting on the meaning of the Resurrection of Jesus, we embrace the Spirit of renewal and rebirth; we bear witness to God's unshakeable faithfulness and unconquerable love for us; we imagine that day when we, as faithful disciples of Christ, will shine gloriously with Him! At this time of year especially, I find these words of St. Paul truly inspiring: "Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, in an instant, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1 Cor 15:51-52)

It has been a huge blessing for me to serve as your pastor here at St. Philip the Apostle for just these first few weeks. I have already witnessed numerous examples of your faith and trust in God. You are a prayerful, humble, and welcoming parish. You value God, your families, and your community above all else. And I know that despite some ongoing restrictions you have a desire to serve the Lord and our community, and I know this comes from a place of love and gratitude for his abundant blessings in your lives.

Perhaps you realize it or perhaps you don't, but you have helped me grow as a priest (and as a new pastor) in just the short time I have been here in Rim Country. I trust that somehow the good Lord has spoken to you through my ministry and will continue to do so. I ask for your continued prayers and I promise to pray for you as we journey together in his Name.

We are blessed to celebrate the victory of Christ now and for several weeks to come in the Church's calendar. With overflowing gratitude, however, *let us always keep his victory fresh in our minds and hearts*. So that whatever the good Lord has in store for us in the coming months and years we will spend together, we keep our eyes always fixed on Him, and especially on what He has accomplished for us.

Journeying together as a parish family, we will follow in his footsteps, hold steadfast along the way, and trust in his power to protect us, sanctify us, guide us, and give us his peace. As we celebrate the ultimate victory which is the Resurrection of Jesus, we each accept his incredibly generous offer to share it with us: "I will give the victor the right to sit with me on my throne, as I myself first won the victory and sit with my Father on his throne." (Rev 3:21)

Happy Easter! Happy Resurrection Sunday! Alleluia! He is Risen! Alleluia!

Yours in Jesus through Mary and Joseph,

Fr. Tom