

# CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY, HE IS RISEN!



My Dear St. Joseph Parish Family,

In normal times, we would have gathered throughout this week to conclude our Lenten journey, enter into the most Sacred Paschal Triduum, and rejoice together with great celebration and fanfare in the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. These are, however, not normal times. Instead, we are, perhaps, celebrating this Easter in a way that is much closer to the first Easter. On that first Easter Sunday, the disciples of the Lord hid themselves behind locked doors following the death of the Master. Fearful, afraid, and isolated, they could not come to believe the reports from Mary Magdalene and others that the tomb was empty and that Jesus had risen from the dead. As we will even hear from St. Luke in two weeks' time, two of the disciples were so discouraged and downtrodden at what had happened that they abandoned Jerusalem and left to go to Emmaus.

We are now where they are! We are called, out of love of our neighbor, to be social distancing and, outside of essential travel, to be limiting where we go and who we physically interact with. We do not yet know of what the future holds for us or when we will be able to return to our normal activities. Yet, like the first disciples on that glorious Eastern morning, as Jesus appeared in their midst, we are called even now to place our trust in the Lord all the same. We need to trust that the Lord is truly risen and that he can break through our isolation, our darkness, and our fear just as He did for the first disciples. Risen from the dead, Jesus Christ gave the gift of hope and peace to His disciples who were fearful and afraid. And, He gives us this same gift even today.

As we will hear in our readings for the coming weeks, our Lord did not, has not, and will never abandoned His disciples. At the end of the Easter season, we will celebrate Pentecost Sunday, when our Lord sends His Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. Filled with the Holy Spirit, they are emblazoned to emerge from their hiding in fear and to begin courageously preaching the Gospel message: That in Jesus Christ, death and sin are not the end. We have been invited to participate in His resurrection and are called to eternal life with our Triune God in heaven. Even at a time like this, we can trust in the

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power of Jesus' resurrection and know that He will use even these times of necessary social distancing and isolation to spread the good news in ways and through means that we never even imagined possible.

This Easter Vigil, we were prepared to welcome five individuals into the Church: One catechuman to be initiated by the waters of baptism (Quinn) and four candidates to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church (Bruce, Eric, Kat, and Shar). All five would have received the Sacrament of Confirmation and have been fed with the Holy Eucharist for the first time. As we could not safely gather, however, we are not able to receive them yet. We do not yet know at this time when we will be able to safely gather together again and welcome these five wonderful individuals into the Church and celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation with them. Until that time when we can all gather together again, let us keep them in our prayers.

In the same way, let us also continue to pray for one another. Though we may, for now, have to remain physically apart, we always remain united together in prayer as the Body of Christ. And, when we are united through prayer in Jesus Christ, nothing can ever truly separate us. For this reason, I encourage you to continue joining in the Sacrifice of the Mass through acts of spiritual communion on a daily basis. This devotional practice cultivates in our hearts a constant desire for the Holy Eucharist. The Mass, as the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, has infinite, spiritual value beyond anything we can even begin to imagine. We will continue to offer our liturgies viewable on live-stream as we are able to. If there are any needs we can assist you with, please call the Parish Office (824-1380). We are here for you and we look forward to the day when we can gather together again as a parish family.

Faithfully in the Risen Christ, Fr. David



### LIVE-STREAMED LITURGIES FROM ST. JOSEPH

**Daily Mass** - Monday-Friday at 11:30 AM ; Saturday at 9 AM

**Sunday Mass** - Sunday at 11 AM

**Rosary** - Monday-Saturday - 4 PM

**Vespers / Evening Prayer** - Monday-Saturday - 6 PM

*VIEWABLE ON FACEBOOK (@STJOSEPHCHURCHBLUFFTON) OR ON OUR PARISH WEBSITE (WWW.STJOSEPHCHURCHBLUFFTON.COM/LIVE-STREAM)*



### POPE FRANCIS' EASTER MESSAGE

As Christians, “we acquire a fundamental right that can never be taken away from us: **the right to hope**. It is a new and living hope that comes from God. It is not mere optimism; it is not a pat on the back or an empty word of encouragement, with a passing smile. No. It is a gift from heaven, which we could not have earned on our own. Over these weeks, we have kept repeating, “All will be well”, clinging to the beauty of our humanity and allowing words of encouragement to rise up from our hearts. But as the days go by and fears grow, even the boldest hope can dissipate. Jesus' hope is different. He plants in our hearts the conviction that **God is able to make everything work unto good, because even from the grave he brings life.**”