

Homily based on the readings from April 20, 2025 (Acts 10.34a, 37-43; Colossians 3.1-14; John 20.1-9)

There are very few certainties in life. Everyone here has probably heard the saying, attributed to Benjamin Franklin, that “in this world nothing can be *said* to be *certain*, except death and taxes.” It is a curious coincidence that Good Friday – our annual commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ – took place this year just a few days after the deadline for filing our taxes. By willingly becoming human, Christ subjected himself both to death *and* to taxes – but, in doing so, he fundamentally refashioned the world.

One of the most terrifying aspects of *death*, at least according to human wisdom, is its *permanence*. In the words of Shakespeare, death is “the undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveller returns.” As we read in the Book of Ecclesiastes: “the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward.” This is not some new insight that was developed by modern scientists or

philosophers – but a deep, ancestral knowledge dating back to our first forebears.

This fact was just as familiar to Jesus’ disciples on the first Easter morning. They *knew* that death was inescapable – that it was woven into the basic fabric of the universe. Even though Christ had foretold and foreshadowed his Resurrection on *numerous* occasions, they were still unable to comprehend the situation they were facing. At first, the only explanation that even *remotely* made sense to the individuals entering the tomb was that Jesus’ body had been stolen.

The events that would unfold over the next few days and weeks radically reshaped their understanding of death *and* life. The Apostles and the other followers of Jesus – individually and in larger groups – repeatedly encountered the Risen Christ in the flesh. They saw him, they spoke with him, they *ate* with him. These “witnesses chosen by God” had the unique opportunity to experience something entirely and amazingly *new* – not just something *they* had never seen before, but something that had

never occurred previously in the entire history of the *universe*. When shackled to the Lamb of God, the iron bonds of death had simply crumbled into dust.

The point, of course, is that every single one of us – man, woman, and child – has been invited to share in Christ’s victory over death. The purpose of our Easter celebration is to make that invitation *concrete*. It is no accident that – throughout the history of the Church – Easter has always been the designated day for adult converts to receive the Sacrament of Baptism. At its *core*, Baptism is a reenactment of – and a participation in – Christ’s death and Resurrection. In the words of the Catechism:

[T]he “plunge” into the water symbolizes the catechumen’s burial into Christ’s death, from which he rises up by resurrection with him, as “a new creature.” (1214)

As Saint Paul puts it:

We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. (Romans 6.4)

Whether we were baptized as infants or as adults, each of us has already partaken in the *incomparable* and the *indescribable* glory of Christ's Resurrection.

There is a great deal more, of course, that remains for us to do. For good or ill, we still have to navigate the perils and pitfalls of this *mortal* life, before we *finally* experience the *eternal* life that Christ has purchased for us with his blood. Nevertheless, as we await the full unveiling of the Light of Christ, we must never lose sight of the *absolute* certainty that our own lives are no longer overshadowed by the darkness of death. Christ *died* so that all of us may *live*. Alleluia and Amen!