

Homily based on the readings from April 22, 2025 (Acts 2.36-41; John 20.11-18)

“Woman, why are you weeping?” Like Christians around the world, I am sure that each of us is still reeling from the news of Pope Francis’s death yesterday morning. Even though we were well aware of his age and his illness, the actual event – I think – came as a shock to all of us. As members of the *family* that *is* the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church, we have all lost a beloved kinsman – the man who served as our spiritual father for over a dozen years.

Despite the differing circumstances, all of us can identify today with the sadness and confusion experienced by Mary Magdalene. Mourners around the world – from Rome to Buenos Aires – are quietly weeping, just as *she* did outside the tomb of Jesus. That is fitting; that is appropriate. It remains to be seen exactly what arrangements will be made for the Holy Father’s funeral at the Vatican – and for other

memorials closer to home – but each of us should take the time to grieve for the loss we are experiencing.

Nevertheless, it is no *accident* that the Lord called Pope Francis home during the Octave of Easter – just as he did with Pope John Paul twenty years ago. After a lifetime of ministry, both of these men – through their own mortality – offered a final testimony to the *fundamental* truth of the Christian Gospel: that every single one of us – man, woman, and child – has been invited to share in Christ’s victory over death.

The very *purpose*, in fact, of the Easter season is to make that invitation *concrete*. Throughout the history of the Church, Easter has always been the time when converts 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)

Even though we must all pass through the darkness of death, we know that Christ's light is waiting for us on the other side. *Christ indeed from death is risen, our new life obtaining.*

Pope Francis – Jorge Mario Bergoglio – who received the Sacrament of Baptism over eighty-eight years ago, has finally completed the first stage of his journey with Jesus Christ. While we can and we should mourn for the loss suffered by the Church – indeed, by the entire world – we must also *rejoice* in the promise of the Resurrection, to which both the *life* and the *death* of Pope Francis provided such a clear and eloquent witness.