

The Homily for the Easter Sunday

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be now and always acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer.



Lent is one of the oldest observations on the Christian calendar. Like all Christian holy days and holidays, it has changed over the years, but its purpose has always been the same: self-examination, penitence, demonstrated by self-denial, all in preparation for Easter.

“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights and afterwards he was famished.”

The goal of Lent was to reorient our lives by focusing our lives on the disciplines of the Christian Faith. It was a time set aside for us to connect our faith with the ways in which we live, move, and have our being throughout daily life. Thus, the result of a fruitful Lenten journey is a renewed spirit and a genuine desire to become an incarnational presence in the world. We have now come to the end of our renewal journey - 40 days of fasting, self-examination, prayer, scripture reading, confession - all to grow closer to God through more time with Jesus. So, this Easter morning, what has changed? Is your life any different today because of your Lenten experience?

What *is* very different is that today we see the involvement of the heavenly host in this great day of Resurrection. The angels are at the Tomb of Jesus, witnesses of His Resurrection; but Angels have been involved **THROUGHOUT** the ministry and life of Jesus, at His birth, after His temptation, an angel strengthened Him at Gethsemane (Luke 22:43), and today, the angels are at the **TOMB** (Luke 24: 1-8) They have been his heavenly companions throughout His earthly life....

“On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ ” Then they remembered his words.

The angels will also be with us at the **ASCENSION** (Acts 1:6-11) teaching us once again...

“ So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

The angels were involved in the life of Jesus for many reasons, Gabriel the message bearer at the Annunciation, then telling the shepherds of His birth, always teaching and pointing to the Saviour, and one of their tasks - to show the disciples, and us, about the grace of God and the nature of the Gospel – and to keep us on track in our faith in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Today, in our Easter Mass, we will rejoice with Angels and Archangels and the whole company of heaven as we celebrate the Holy Mysteries. The rejoicing in heaven at the Resurrection must have been a deafening affair, for it signified the crushing victory of God over sin and death and hell...it was the final blow to that which held people such as you and me back from a free and guiltless life – a life made new by the Holy Spirit. It was the triumph of Light over darkness – and it was bought at a price – the Blood of Jesus Christ.

The hosts of heaven are supplemented by the Redeemed, the fellowship of the Saints in Light, those washed clean in the Blood of the Lamb. All of these will join us today in our acts worship and praise; And so, if you are by yourself, or just a few together, if you feel a little low or hopeless, open up your spiritual eyes and realise that you are a part of a mighty and glorious family of God, a host that no man can number... and rejoice aloud with great joy; for Jesus Christ is Risen today, and all of heaven is shouting “Alleluia!”

In the Name of the Father, + and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen

