

NACPA Mass Homily

April 30, 2019

I want to welcome all of you to San Antonio, and it is a great joy for me to celebrate this Second Sunday of Easter, Divine Mercy Sunday, with you. This Sunday's sacred liturgy brings to a conclusion the Octave of Easter, in which we have celebrated each day as Easter Sunday, itself! For us as a Christian people this is our most important celebration of all.

Today's readings crackle with the energy that emanates from Jesus' resurrection. We see how the early converts gathered at Solomon's Portico at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem to the admiration of many of the citizens of Jerusalem. We see how people look to Peter with great expectation. We hear St. John tell us of his revelatory encounter with Our Lord who declares clearly that He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and end of all things. And we see the apostles filled with a combination of fear, overwhelming joy, doubt, and faith as the Risen Christ encounters them in the upper room from today's gospel reading.

There is a problem. The problem is that we have heard these readings so often, and proclaimed in such a matter-of-fact way, that the drama, astonishment, and sheer power of God's word to transform us is lost! We are meant, in hearing this word, to enter the skin of the apostles as they are startled by the encounter with the Risen One! We are meant to enter into their experience as they see the Lord and hear Him speak! What must they have thought? How must they have felt? This encounter with the Risen Lord is an encounter that changes everything!

You and I know that the greatest treasure of the Church is her people. And we know that in our Chanceries, Pastoral Centers, Agencies, and church related organizations our greatest asset is, again, our people. You and I also know that our people are also our

greatest difficulty, at times, and that the management of personnel can be a great headache! It is precisely here that we encounter a danger. The danger is to become so focused on our problems and difficulties that our spirit of hope becomes diminished! We are not paying attention to the resurrection because we have become stuck on the grief of the crucifixion! Our Holy Father, Pope Francis spoke about this at the Easter Vigil the other night. “As he celebrated the Easter Vigil in St. Peter’s Basilica for the seventh time since his election as successor to St. Peter, Pope Francis called on Christians worldwide not to give into “a kind of tomb psychology” where all hopes and dreams are buried, but to remember that “Easter is the feast of tombstones taken away, of rocks rolled aside.” (America magazine, April 20, 2019)

I was looking at your own materials the other day in preparation for being with you today and tomorrow. I saw in the “Twelve Good Habits for Administrative Service” the possibility for rolling away the stones that demoralize or discourage us at times, and to see the power of the resurrection imbuing the work of Administration! Christ is the Alpha, or beginning for our reason to be as managers and administrators in Catholic life, and Christ is the Omega, or end for which we exist! We need to fall on our knees, like St. Thomas, and to be able to say “my Lord and my God,” as he did! It is precisely Christ who, in His resurrection power, energizes and empowers us for our mission!

May the power of Christ’s resurrection empower you! May the power of Christ’s resurrection roll away any stones that may be blocking your hearts! May you recall that the Risen Lord is your Alpha and your Omega in your important service to the Church! And may the power of the Holy Spirit, breathed out upon you, be your guard, your wisdom, and your strength. Amen.