

Easter Vigil & Easter Sunday

You probably do not know the name of Nikolai Ivanovich Bukarin. He was a Russian Communist leader, who took part in the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. He was the editor of the Soviet newspaper *Pravda* and was a full member of the Politburo. There is a story told about a journey he took from Moscow to Kiev in 1930 to address a huge assembly of Communists. The subject was atheism. Addressing the crowd, he attacked Christianity, hurling insults and arguments against it. When he had finished, he looked out at the audience. "Are there any questions?" he demanded. Deafening silence filled the auditorium. Then one man stood up, approached the platform and mounted the lectern. After surveying the crowd, he shouted the ancient greeting of the Russian Orthodox Church: "CHRIST IS RISEN!" The crowd stood up and shouted in a thundering voice: "HE IS RISEN INDEED!" Amazed and dejected, Bukharin left the stage in silence. He had learned the lesson that Faith in Christ's Resurrection was deeply rooted in his Russian Orthodox Communist followers!

So now you have tonight's/today's four word homily "He is Risen Indeed!" Tonight there so much I could say, but the liturgical actions speak loudly these sacred days, especially for our three elect who about to be fully initiate into the Church. So instead, I want to share a few life messages with you:

- 1) We are to be a Resurrection people: Easter, the feast of the Resurrection, gives us the joyful message that we are a "Resurrection people." This means that we are not supposed to lie buried in the tomb of our sins, evil habits and dangerous addictions. It gives us the Good News that no tomb can hold us down anymore - not the tomb of despair, discouragement or doubt, nor that of death. Instead, we are expected to live a joyful and peaceful life, constantly experiencing the real presence of the Risen Lord in all the events of our lives. *"This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad"* (Psalm 118:24).
- 2) We need to seek our peace and joy in the Risen Jesus: The living presence of the Risen Lord gives us lasting peace and celestial joy in the face of the boredom, suffering, pain and tensions of our day-to-day life. *"Peace be with you!"* was His salutation to His disciples at all post-Resurrection appearances. For the true Christian, every day must be an Easter Day, lived joyfully in the close company of the Risen Lord.
- 3) We are to be transparent Christians: We are called to be transparent Christians, showing others, through our lives of love, mercy, compassion and self-sacrificing service, that the Risen Jesus is living in our hearts.
- 4) We need to live new, disciplined lives in the Risen Jesus: Our awareness of the all-pervading, loving presence of the Risen Lord in and around us, and the strong conviction of our own coming resurrection, live the ways of the Lord. Our conviction that the Risen Lord is present in our neighbours and in all those we encounter should encourage us to respect them, and to render them loving, humble and selfless service.

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- 5) We need to remember Easter in our Good Fridays: Easter reminds us that every Good Friday in our lives will have an Easter Sunday and that Jesus will let us share the power of His Resurrection. Each time we display our love of others, we share in the Resurrection. Each time we face a betrayal of trust, we share in the Resurrection of Jesus. Each time we continue to hope – even when our hope seems unanswered – we share in the power of Jesus 'Resurrection. In short, the message of Easter is that nothing can destroy us – not pain, sin, rejection or death –because Christ has conquered all these, and we too can conquer them if we put our Faith in Him.

- 6) We are to be bearers of the Good News of Resurrection power. Resurrection is Good News, but at the same time, it's sometimes painful because it involves death. Before the power of the Resurrection can take hold in our own lives, we're called to die to sin, to die to self. We may even have to die to our own dreams, so that God can do what He wants to do with our lives. Resurrection is about seeing our world in a new way. Early that Easter morning, Mary Magdalene did not find what she was looking for, the dead body of Jesus. But she found something better than she could have imagined: the Risen Jesus. Sometimes, the things we think we want most are not granted to us. What we get instead is an experience of God's new ways of working in the world. That's the power of the Resurrection. When those moments come, we must spread the news--just as Mary Magdalene did: *We have seen the Lord!*

- 7) We need to be Easter people (Fr. V. Kizhakevely): We are in truth called to be an "Easter people", because there are many Easter moments in our lives. It may be in prayer, when for a moment we really experience the love of God, especially having felt his absence, as we often do, like the disciples who experienced the emptiness of the tomb. It may be that moment when we are touched and given hope by a word of scripture - like the disciples on the road to Emmaus when their hearts were uplifted in joy and hope as the Lord opened up the scriptures to them. Or it may be a moment during the Sacrament of Reconciliation, after we have acknowledged honestly our weakness and selfishness, our sinfulness and come to experience his forgiveness. Indeed, there are times in our lives when we know, through faith, that the times of calm after the storm, of joy after sorrow, of restored vitality after weary days on our journey of faith, are truly times when we share in his paschal mystery. (Fr. Antony Kadavil).

In the words of one of my professors: I hope this helps.
Now I want to see if you were listening:

(Loudly) Christ is Risen!
He is Risen Indeed!