

## **Easter Sunday, Cycle C: April 4, 2010**

**Alleluia! Alleluia!** What a joy it is to be here with everyone this morning. No, I'm not on a sugar rush from all the Easter candy. I'm just relishing in the spirit of the moment as we gather in a beautiful expression of Church. We are all gathered this morning to celebrate an incredible act of love by our Lord, Jesus, the Christ.

And there are any number of things that I could preach upon today: our Lord's passion, the Last Supper, the agony in the garden and Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene, but I'm not going to do that. Or, I could try to get inside the minds of those who actually saw the resurrected Jesus. What were they thinking? What did the resurrected Jesus look like? But, I'm not going to do that either.

Today, I want to extend to you and myself the opportunity to participate in a mystery. Actually, God is extending the invitation; all that I am doing is passing along the message. But, we theologians give this mystery a fancy name, because it is so special: it is the Paschal mystery. Perhaps, you have heard of that term.

The Paschal Mystery is what we are celebrating today. It's the greatest of all mysteries, and I'm speaking of the passion, death and resurrection of our Lord. This is what we are being invited to enter into and embrace.

And what is the pay-off, if we use the vernacular, by saying yes to this invitation into the mysterious? Well, despite our weaknesses and limitations, we are being invited to participate in God's graces being alive within us. It is there, within God's grace, that the world can be seen as a place of hope and beauty.

In this mystery, we can hope to become more like what we ingest at this sacred table. In this mystery, we discover that ultimately nothing can harm us, not even death. The invitation is ours, we can accept it and participate in it, as it changes our lives through the grace of God, or we can remain seated on the sidelines and ride the bench of secularism. The choice is ours.

This mystery is many things. However, there is one thing it is not and that is a “get out of pain” free card. Even as we embrace the Paschal Mystery, we will still experience pain and sorrow. People will still disappoint us and the tough things of life will not go away. However, they will never get the best of us, because as we carry our own crosses, we can be assured that God will somehow transform that pain and transform us unto something new and beautiful. And at the core of this metamorphosis is a life of peace and joy that’s beyond our wildest imaginations. Our lives will have a meaning that we have never recognized before and the world will never look the same. All that we have to do is say: yes! Yes, to the mystery and yes to all that God has to offer. All it takes is an open heart and an open spirit and then we let go and let God transform us, create us anew, through a spiritual metamorphosis and awakening.

Today is the most sacred of days, a day in which the world was changed forever and we can become a part of that change. That’s the Paschal Mystery, which can become the template for our lives. All that we need to do is accept the invitation and participate by letting God do what he promises: create us anew.

So, my friends, we are all invited. We don’t have to worry about what to wear or what to bring. We don’t need to worry about a masquerade costume. Just come as you are, because the genuine you is the only person that God wants to see. Then we can all join in the shout: Alleluia! He is risen!