



From the Pastor

Fr. John Riccardo

Days of joy, hope, & excitement!

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

This simple refrain has been the constant message of the Christian people since the very beginning of the faith. This is the heart of the Gospel.

All too often, though, both Christians and non-Christians alike have mistakenly thought that this proclamation translates to something like, "Jesus has been raised; you will be, too." The connotation of this can be that we Christians just sit around with our heads in the sky, waiting for Jesus to return. In reality, though, the Easter proclamation is something more like this, "Jesus has been raised; *there is work to do!*"

A recap for our visitors

This weekend we know that there are many visitors with us. We are sincerely delighted to have you here! As you join us for this great Feast, I simply want to call your attention to the fact that you are stepping into the midst of an assembly that for the past thirteen weeks has been on something like an extended parish mission, a sort of pilgrimage, where we have been diving deeply into the essence of the story that is Scripture. We have called this mission, or pilgrimage, *Rerouting* (all of these homilies, by the way, are available to watch or listen to on our website). In the course of these weeks, we have simplified the message of the Scriptures down to the following triad: creation, fall, and redemption, or, as we have also put

it, Big Bang I, Big Thud, and Big Bang II. Toward the end of this mission, after considering all that the Lord has done for us, we invited anyone who felt inclined to put their name on a card that was intended to be a tangible way of saying that he or she wants to surrender his or her life over to the Lord. We then burned those cards in what is called the Paschal Fire on the greatest night of the Church, the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday.

What's next for ALL of us?

Now, however, we have finished *Rerouting*. A frequent question, raised by many people in this parish to us clergy and staff, especially in these past few weeks, has been, "What are *you guys* (the clergy and staff) going to do *next*?" This is a great question. It is, though, I think, the wrong question. The right question is, "What are *we* (the whole parish) going to do *now*?" *Rerouting* was but a means to an end, a sort of catalyst for us to be able to take up the call from Jesus to go and make disciples, to tell others about the extraordinary things that God has done for us in His Son, to bring the message of the Gospel into the community that is Plymouth, mindful that at the end of the day it's either God and His love or it's nothing at all.

First, let's celebrate our parish feast day

In answer, then, to the question that has been frequently asked, I, together with Fr. Prentice, Fr. John,

Fr. Pierre, Deacon Dave and all the parish staff, would like to invite anyone who would like, but especially those who have made the decision to sign over "the deed of ownership" of their lives to the living God, to a special night on Wednesday, April 26th. That date "just happens" to be our Feast Day here at Our Lady of Good Counsel. We will start, as always on a Wednesday night, with Mass, and then a time for us to begin to talk about what the Lord is inviting us to do next. It will be a night to celebrate the Lord's goodness and to hear a bit about the vision for the next number of months. This is open to anyone and everyone who wants to come, but is perhaps especially for those who made the decision to sign the cards that we have been gathering these past few weeks. (By the way, we will continue to have those same cards at the entrances to the Church throughout the Easter season, and should anyone feel inclined to sign them, please feel free to drop them in the urns that are at those same entrances.)

These are exciting days here at OLG. Christ is risen! He is alive! He is in our midst and moving powerfully amongst us! May this season of grace be filled with joy, hope, and extraordinary gratitude for you and all those you love

In His love,
Fr. John