

Easter - New Life
Homily of April 20, 2003
by Fr. Brian Timoney

When Judas left the supper room to begin his act of betrayal, John's gospel says very bluntly, "It was night." Not only had physical darkness fallen, but the world was plunged into spiritual and moral darkness as well.

And then came Easter morning. It was still dark as Mary approached the tomb, but then the wondrous light of faith burst upon the world. The beloved disciple saw and believed, believed even though there was no compelling evidence for such belief. Is it any wonder that Easter fire and Easter light have become the powerful symbols of Resurrection, the power, the fire of love, Mary Magdalene and the beloved disciple leading to the light of faith? What did their faith, their love, reveal to them? A God who states very emphatically that violence, suffering and death will not, ultimately, triumph in our world. The Resurrection is God's way of saying that violence is not the answer to human disagreements, that suffering can be redemptive, that death is not the end of life.

At Eastertime we are asked to look at violence, at suffering, at human death in the light of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. We might say that, in raising Jesus from the dead, God was protesting against violence and suffering and death. Well, I would suggest that, to make the Resurrection relevant to us today, we Christians must protest against violence and suffering and the unnecessary death that is so prevalent in our society today, and that we so easily accept as inevitable. As you know very well for yourselves, every day in our newspapers and on our TV screens, we are confronted with a tragic litany of senseless suffering and brutal death. This very morning, there are long lines at St. Anthony's Dining Room, at Glide Memorial, at St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room. Thousands are homeless and hungry. They have suffered economic death. They are the mentally or physically handicapped that are just ignored by people. They have suffered a social death. There is the living death of oppressed peoples throughout our world. Death and destruction rained down on New York, on Washington, and on the cities of Iraq.

No, this is not intended to be a gloom and doom homily on such a bright beautiful Easter morning. On the contrary, I want to emphasize that the Resurrection Story is telling us that all of this is not, is not inevitable, that suffering and death are not the end, that ultimately life will triumph. We are called to have a "Resurrection" faith. We are called to believe that the message of Christ can make a difference if it is acted upon. We are called to believe that, as the love of the Father for Jesus brought about His resurrection, so our love for all people, without exception, can bring new life to our world. You see, the scriptures make it very, very clear that Jesus did not raise Himself from the dead. The scriptures tell us clearly that Christ was raised from the dead by the

power of the Father. In other words, someone else took action. The Father took action. Our world cannot heal itself. Our world cannot give itself new life. Someone else must take action. We Christians must take action. We Christians must be involved. We must love this world of ours into new life, new possibilities for peace and justice. It may appear to be a daunting task. This is precisely where our faith must step in. We must believe the words of Jesus, "I am the Resurrection and the Life..." It is through Jesus, through His teaching, through His example, through His ideals that new life can be brought to this world of ours.

Today, this morning, beautiful Easter morning, we give thanks to God for the waters of Baptism that brought us new life in Christ. We give thanks to God for assuring us of our own resurrection to eternal life. We want others to share in that same Easter hope. Let us share it with them. Amen.