



BISHOP'S MONTHLY REFLECTION

April 2024

Homily of Easter Vigil

-Welcoming Our New Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord-

This evening we are immersed in a variety of rich symbols of our faith: fire, the Paschal Candle, Holy Scripture, water, oil, Holy Chrism, bread and wine. All these signs and symbols beg us to acknowledge the Risen Christ in our midst.

This evening, you, our Catechumens, the Elect, who have been preparing to be initiated into the Church, the Church that Jesus established over two thousand years ago, the Catholic Church, we welcome and thank God for you. We rejoice in your response to the call of Jesus to follow him - to be his disciple.

This evening, you will be baptized into the mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, through the pouring on of water. You will then be anointed by the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation. Finally, you will be nourished with the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, as you receive your First Holy Communion.

My friends, God is coming down to deliver you from sin and death, to save you and to dwell with you forever. All of this is God's gift to you. Be assured that we, the faith community, the Church, are here to support you with our loving presence and faithful prayers. We the baptized, your brothers and sisters, welcome you home! We pray that your relationship with Jesus, the Risen Lord, will continue to grow throughout your lives! This must be your highest purpose!

This evening, at this sacred vigil, in the brightness of the blessed fire and by the light of the burning flame of the Easter Candle, things are made clear for us to see that Jesus has already destroyed all that blocks, obstructs and prevents us from knowing God in our lives. So, let us rejoice as we keep vigil with you and anxiously await the dawn of Easter morning.

My friends, the large stone that blocks the entrance of the tomb, the obstacle that has held humanity bound within the tomb, immersed in darkness of death, has been removed by the power of God's love. It has been rolled away! My friends, the tomb is empty! Christ is Risen! Let this be our hope and consolation, for according to God's promise, we, too, will rise at the Risen Lord's Second Coming! So, throughout this grace filled season of Easter, let us joyfully proclaim in one voice:

Alleluia, alleluia, He is risen! Indeed, He is truly risen!

My friends, together let us rejoice in the Resurrection of Jesus! Let us remember, and never forget, that our merciful and saving God has not, and will never, abandoned us! Amen!

A Blessed and Happy Easter to all!

Let us congratulate and welcome our brothers and sisters, throughout our diocese, who have received the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil. Let us continue to support them with our fellowship and by our prayers. Let us pray:

O God, who give constant increase
to your Church by new offspring,
grant that your servants may hold fast in their lives
to the Sacrament they have received in faith.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. Amen.
(Collect of Monday of the Octave of Easter)

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+ Myron J. Cotta". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned on a light-colored rectangular background.

Bishop Cotta