

## Easter Sunday

Three people die and are at the pearly gates... St. Peter says to them, "Before you can enter the kingdom of heaven, you must answer a question. Why do we celebrate Easter?"

First one thinks and says, "Easter is for the kids to get candy. They dress up in costumes and go door to door getting treats, right?" "No, I'm sorry." St. Peter says "You may not enter."

The second one says "I know! It's about Jesus, right?" St. Peter looks hopeful. "Yeah, we celebrate the birth of Christ and give out presents." "Nope!" St. Peter shakes his head. "You may not enter."

The third one says, "I got this. Easter is when Jesus came out of the ground." St. Peter nods encouragingly. "Yes, yes, very good! You may en-""Oh," the third person interrupts. "And if he sees his shadow, it means there are three more weeks of winter."

Dear Friends,

I wish you a happy and glorious Easter. Easter brings us new life. It is an important event that God's continued presence with us. The good news is that it is a simple, faith-filled story of God hearing us and answering us by sending his son to show how much he cares. Easter is a joyful time of promises fulfilled, and our trust in God's promises rewarded.

There are some reasons for us to believe in Easter and understand that God stays with us through his son. The women at the tomb that morning had been with him before he died. Peter had a different reaction before and after Jesus' resurrection. Then there was the empty tomb, and the transformation of the apostles from fear to boldness and confidence. These are all tangible evidence that God stays with us.

Encountering Jesus in his resurrection and glory helps us stay with him in our faith. As we are the congregation celebrating Easter, we are expected to stay with Jesus. The Eucharist brings that encounter to us every day or every weekend.

Since the time of creation, God has been helping us and staying with us. There is a connection between the Garden of Eden and the Garden of Gethsemane. One is the realization of their sins and the absence of God within themselves. Another one is feeling the support and care of God in the suffering. He suffered for the sin committed in the Garden of Eden. Jesus' resurrection shared the love of God after all our sins had been forgiven and reconciled in Jesus' death.

God stays with us all the time. He asks us to stay with him in his resurrection. Rev 3:20 says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, [then] I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me."

Hearing his voice is a joy and a source of peace. Peter and other disciples heard his voice; Mary Magdalene heard his voice of resurrection. Let us also listen to his voice and stay with him.