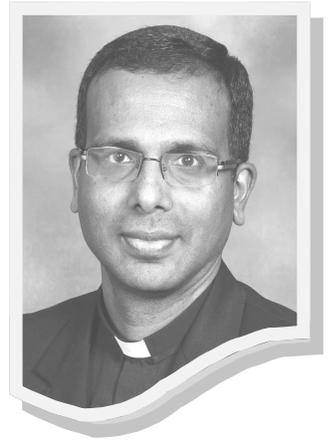




## From the Pastor



**He is risen! Alleluia!**

**W**e welcome all who have joined us for the celebration of Easter. We are delighted to have you with us. A special welcome also to all who are visiting us or returning after being away for a time. I am glad you chose St. Francis of Assisi Church to worship the Lord this Easter. Easter is the celebration of Christ's resurrection from the dead. As we know from the Gospels, Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day following his crucifixion, which would be Sunday. His resurrection marks the triumph of good over evil, sin, and death. It is this singular event that proves that those who trust in God and accept Christ will be raised from the dead.

Because Easter represents the fulfillment of God's promises to mankind, it is the most important holiday on the Christian calendar. In the Gospels, the precise details of the Easter narrative vary slightly, but none of these variances are critical to the main story—that Jesus rose from the dead, leaving the tomb empty. The central teaching of Christ is that we must die to ourselves in order to live. We follow the Lord who “came that we might have life and have it abundantly.”

The Easter Vigil is a richly symbolic celebration of our belief in the Resurrection. Beginning with the blessing of the new Fire and Light Ceremony, the Easter Vigil recounts our salvation history in an extended liturgy of the Word, ending in Baptism and the renewal of baptismal promises. The Vigil culminates with the liturgy of the Eucharist that unleashes our Easter joy—not just for a day, but for the next 50 days of the Easter season.

Easter Sunday is the triumphant finale of the Triduum, and the inseparable conclusion of the Holy Saturday Vigil. It is the preeminent Sunday, reminding us of why we celebrate Mass and worship the Lord throughout the year. Alleluia is the word for the day. We celebrate Jesus' victory over sin and death, and his glorious return to life at Easter. Our Savior lives. He is alive! Alleluia! **I wish you all a very HAPPY EASTER!**

The coming Sunday is the Divine Mercy Sunday. A plenary indulgence is granted on the Feast of the Divine Mercy to all the faithful who go to Confession (during any time that week), receive Communion, pray for the intentions of the Holy Father, and take part in the prayers and devotions held in honor of the Divine Mercy. To facilitate this, we will be reciting the Divine Mercy Chaplet 20 minutes prior to all the coming weekend Masses.

My special thanks are extended to all those who have helped us with this celebration of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. Thanks for your love, dedication, and commitment to St. Francis of Assisi Church. God bless all your sacrifices. Have a blessed Easter!

—Fr. Jose Thomas