

FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ: Grace and peace!



Next Sunday is already Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week. However, for the first time in my priestly life, this year will be different; I will not be celebrating this year's Triduum-Passion Thursday, Good Friday or Easter Resurrection Day with my beloved parishioners. Yet I observe a certain strength and energy associated with the fact that we can be connected to each other spiritually, using the various social media to liturgically celebrate, while awaiting the resurrection of Our Lord. No matter the circumstances we find ourselves today, these readings intensify our Lenten journey towards our own Christian death, and a surge of hope in our resurrection. These consoling words of the dieval mystic, Julian of Norwich can indeed uplift us now, "All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well."

In our First Reading, Ezekiel bears witness to an unprecedented miracle the Lord is about to do, restore life to the deceased Israelites, opening their graves in preparation for return to the Promised Land. He assures his people that nothing – not even death – will stop God from carrying out His promise! St. Paul, in the Second Reading, affirms 'that the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead and Who dwells within us gives life to our mortal bodies.'

Our Gospel from John this weekend focuses on *resurrection hope*, the compelling account of Jesus' raising of Lazarus from three days in the grave. This ultimate sign of our Deliverer is representative of victory over death. Holy Mother Church assures us that we too will be raised into eternal life after our battle with sin and death in this world. We cannot forget that the life we live in Christ now will continue after our death.

"Roll away the stone, unbind him and let him go" were the sweetly consoling words from Our Lord. Mercifully, Jesus comes to us in the Sacraments, as we pray, as we read sacred scripture, giving us knowledge and hope in our own bodily death. Let us ask Jesus during this Holy Mass to bring the light and the power of the One and same Holy Spirit into our lives and liberate us from our personal tombs.

We need to be ready to welcome death any time as the gateway to *New Life*. St. Therese of Lisieux found herself flooded with joy when she learned in 1897 that she had tuberculosis, an illness then usually incurable. She welcomed the blood she was coughing up as a harbinger of Jesus' embrace, and she died within a few months of this. "Yes, I'm like a tired and harassed traveler, who reaches the end of his journey and falls over. Yes, but I'll be falling into God's arms!" She reminds us that the true purpose of our life is to be united with God in heaven.

Happy Sunday!