

Bulletin Letter April 4, 2021 Easter Cycle B

Christos Anesti! Alithos Anesti!

Χριστός Ανέστη! Αληθώς ανέστη!

In the earliest times after the Resurrection, people would greet one another at Easter by saying, "**Christos Anesti, Alithos Anesti.**" One person greets the first by saying "*Christ is risen!*" The response is, "*Truly He is risen indeed!*" What a powerful reminder of the ongoing reality of the Resurrection. It does not happen in the past; it is happening right now - with a special emphasis as we celebrate Easter. What power the Risen Christ has – the bounds of death have been cast off and sin is vanquished! New life in eternity is ours through our Lord Jesus. In Luke's Gospel for Easter we encounter the women at the tomb. They have been told to seek Jesus elsewhere; that he was among the living and not the dead. This is indeed the "Good News" and we are reminded that in Christ we can meet all of the challenges, uncertainties, and issues that are part of our daily lives.

This Paschal Feast is truly special. Last year we were able to celebrate via livestream only. Those days of celebrating the Eucharist in an empty church were difficult, although I was well aware of all of you who were with us in Spirit. Thank you for your enduring faith and generosity this past year. We have all faced many challenges along the way. However, as I reflect on the time from last Easter to this one, I am grateful for so many gifts despite the challenges. Among those blessings is the opportunity for spiritual growth through our family of parishes. Many of us are vaccinated, with more to come. The virus seems to be, God willing, slowing its spread. Plus, at least of this writing, the snow is largely gone, and the bulbs are pushing up through fresh earth! This year, Christ is risen in new and powerful ways for our three communities. My gratitude goes to each and every one of you, please be assured of my prayers.

Our three parish **Liturgy Committee** has worked so hard this year, and I thank them for all that they have brought to our communal celebrations. None of what we had to do was easy, but they persevered and I am deeply grateful. This year I ponder the many, many hands and hearts that have brought us this far. Not only did the Liturgy team do incredible work, but I also have our Trustees to thank, many volunteers, and of course our three staffs who rose to numerous challenges. As many of you know, I have a practice of thanking people by name. This year I am not doing that because we are richly blessed to have an enormous number of people at each parish who have done so much to make so much happen. I hope that you know who you are, I know that God knows who you are, and I certainly know who you are. Thank you one and all.

One of the real trials of this year was the **sign-up process** for our liturgies. Many hands went into creating the sign-up and seating process and I thank them for their patience and diligence. I know it is difficult at this time when many of you could finally attend church, but due to social distancing regulations seating was limited. As always, I beg your patience as we adjust to our circumstances. We are all hopeful that the regulations will change so that more people can be accommodated now that

many more are vaccinated. It is frustrating for us as well!

This year the **RCIA program** at Immaculate has been facilitated by **Paul and Carol Heckman** and their daughter, **Lauren Patterson**, along with many others who helped. Through their efforts, and through the efforts of **Helen Burke** at St Joseph's, we have three new people in the church! **Kimberly Cirigliano** was baptized and received First Eucharist and Confirmation. **Shawn McMore** and **Colleen Lodge** were brought into full communion. What joy to see the church thrive and grow in this manner.

May every blessing of the Risen Christ be yours. Whether you are a longstanding parishioner or a new one, a resident or visitor, no matter what brings you here today, in person or online, know that you are held in prayer and gratitude. May the light of Christ shine in your life and may your life reflect it to those you encounter.

Until next week, be well, do good deeds, and say your prayers.

Fr. Jerry