

EASTER HOMILY 2017

As we celebrate Easter with our families and our parish families, we ask the Risen Lord for a true resurrection of our belief that *dramatic missionary growth* of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Rockville Centre can and will happen.

The courageous Cardinal Van Thuan, who witnessed powerfully to his Catholic faith while locked for years in a Vietnam prison, described the logic of Christ's resurrection in our lives in this way: "Jesus cast fire on the earth and he desires the earth to be set ablaze with its brilliant light. You must be the bright flame kindled by apostolic zeal; from your bright light other torches must be kindled until the whole world is a vast sea of living flame."

Together, let's each one of us be instruments of the Risen Lord who start that "vast sea of living flame" here in the Church of Rockville Centre, a vast sea of living flame that spreads throughout the Church in the Northeast, around the country to the whole world.

This Easter, you and I rediscover the power of Christ's Resurrection in a new and fresh way.

A renewed love and confidence in the power of the Risen Christ refreshes and strengthens our marriages, our family relationships and every friendship we experience in the course of our lives.

We allow the Risen Lord to roll away the stones of pride, ego and selfishness from our hearts, stones that may block the power of his presence, power and love in our lives and in our families.

A rediscovery of the power of Christ's resurrection helps our families become part of the "vast sea of living flame" that transforms the world and history.

This Easter 2017 we pray together that the light of the Divine Mercy that streams from the glorified wounds of the Risen Lord may touch the wounds of our families and the wounds of poor families, immigrant and refugee families separated by long distances and upheaval, families living in the midst of war, oppression and persecution, and families struggling with drug abuse, the opioid crisis and the trauma of the culture of death expressed in gang violence.

We are in solidarity this Easter morning with those families that lost loved ones in Central Islip last week because of this violence and with our parish communities that reach out to them with the comfort of the Risen Lord this Easter season.

In his address to the City and to the World this morning in Rome, Pope Francis asked us to pray for the intentions of the world. He said:

Especially in these days, may he sustain the efforts of all those actively engaged in bringing comfort and relief to the civil population in beloved Syria, so greatly suffering from a war that continues to sow horror and death. Yesterday saw the latest vile attack on fleeing refugees, resulting in the death and injury of many. May he grant peace to the entire Middle East, beginning with the Holy Land, as well as in Iraq and Yemen.

May the Good Shepherd remain close to the people of South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, who endure continuing hostilities, aggravated by the grave famine affecting certain parts of Africa.

May the Risen Jesus sustain the efforts of all those who, especially in Latin America, are committed to ensuring the common good of societies marked at times by political and social tensions that in some cases have resulted in violence. May it be possible for bridges of dialogue to be built, by continuing to fight the scourge of corruption and to seek viable and peaceful solutions to disputes, for progress and the strengthening of democratic institutions in complete respect for the rule of law.

May the Good Shepherd come to the aid of Ukraine, still beset by conflict and bloodshed, to regain social harmony. May he accompany every effort to alleviate the tragic sufferings of those affected by the conflict.

St. John Paul II once said that every Mass is celebrated on the Altar of the World and so we celebrate this Easter Sunday Mass on the Altar of these troubled areas of the world and on these troubled areas of Long Island.

As we prepare for the 100th Anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima on May 13th, we ask that the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary may stream through our lives this Easter season to bring us great hope and a resurrection of our hope and faith in the daily power of the Resurrected Christ leading us to our Eternal Destiny.

Know on this Easter Sunday 2017 that as your Shepherd and a Successor of the Apostles what an honor it is to be the servant of each one of your families as together we embrace the Holy Spirit's call to be part of the vast living flame of *dramatic missionary growth* in the Church of Rockville Centre.