

# PASTOR'S PONDERINGS . . .

As a new month begins, we are still celebrating Easter waiting to see if the "Stay at Home" Policy will be relaxed or extended. So, I want to share with all of you my Easter Homily. If I were to give it a title, I would call it, "Easter is here to stay!"

*We were told that we cannot celebrate Easter this year! In one sense this is true because we cannot celebrate it in a normal way or in the way that we are used to celebrating it for years – in church with the family of God and the community of believers. But Easter is here and not even a pandemic can change that reality.*

*With the first Easter, the apostles had to learn and understand the Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead. A "new normal" was given to them and in their astonishment, fear and disbelief, they had to learn it, accept it, believe it and share it.*

*So, too, every year when Easter comes and especially this year, when we are behind closed doors, and the fear of dying and death surrounds us, Easter challenges us to keep learning, understanding, and witnessing to what it means to be an Easter people, what it means to be the children of God. We must celebrate it and keep celebrating it always as best as we are able.*

*The first Easter met the disciples with astonishment and fear. From the angelic messenger at the tomb and Jesus himself to the women, the message was not to be afraid because there is a "new normal." Day after day, they were confronted with the world of Good Friday. In their humanness, it was only right for them to cling to this world. The risen Christ wants to free them from their slavery. He wants them to let go and live in the reality of Easter and it is Easter life and the life of the resurrection that claims them now for all eternity.*

*Don't cling to the world as you want it to be, work for the promised kingdom that God describes. Don't cling to the pressures of achievement and the stress of success, work for the promised kingdom where kindness and humility and gentleness count for*

*more. Don't cling to the hatred that resides deep within, work for the promised kingdom where there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free,*

*male nor female. Don't cling to the mentality that winner takes all or what's in it for me or charity is only when it feels good, work for the Promised Kingdom where you rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep and suffer with those who suffer.*

*Don't cling to the necessity of violence, work for the promised kingdom where strength comes to those who are weak and security, power, trust, hope, mercy, forgiveness, justice and peace come from God alone through God's Son who rose from the dead and in their Spirit.*

*Easter is here to stay. Death no longer has the final word over us. We must live in this world, but we are of another world. We can no longer experience dying and death without hearing, "Alleluia, Jesus Christ is risen! Alleluia, Jesus Christ is risen! Share the victory! Share the Victory!*

*We can leave our Good Friday world and celebrate and live in the reality of Easter in any time, situation and place. Indeed, we must. We are God's children, saved and redeemed. Alleluia is our song now and forever. Amen. Alleluia!! Alleluia!! Alleluia!!*

Whether we can gather again in public or if we must stay in our homes, Easter is always here for us. We must keep learning, understanding, witnessing and celebrating what it means to be an Easter people and find ways to do it. Do not be afraid, Jesus Christ is risen just like he said. Happy Easter everyone!

~~ Fr. Jim



**St. Leo's Prayer Wall** is a place where all, regardless of age, race or creed, are invited to sing God's praises, give Him thanks, and/or call upon His presence for help in times of need. The wall, a place of prayer for all peoples (much like the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem), captures the faces of the community, as well as peacemakers and saints who have inspired us through the ages.

The Wall is a place for staff and volunteers, youth groups, community meetings, and for individuals who pass through our parking lot on the way to work, school, etc., to pray, reflect and pause. We invite you to share in this special way of prayer, joy, and thanksgiving. Praise God! God cares about every need in your life and knows what you need even before you ask Him for help. Our St. Leo the Great parish community promises to remember you in our private prayer, as well as in our communal prayer, which is to say that we are praying for you all the time.



All prayer requests are held in strictest confidence. **Send your prayer request to:** Saint Leo the Great Church, 2573 Saint Leo Place, Cincinnati, OH 45225. You can also submit your prayer request online at: <http://saint-leo/WorksofMercy/PrayerWallMinistry.aspx>.