

## Rev. Donato Infante III - Easter 2018

The other day I received an e-mail with great news. Someone sent out an e-mail about a health product, oil made from oregano. The e-mail ad hyping it up said that if I drink an ounce every day, without changing anything else about my lifestyle, I will lose two pounds a week because it will speed up my metabolism. This would improve my overall health. Someone replied all to that e-mail with a new study on how much sugar should be in our diets, differentiating between added sugars and natural sugars. Health is important, no doubt, but what people seek from health is to escape death, which is not going to happen. It might be delayed, but it comes for all of us eventually. Death is our enemy, but one that, for centuries, there was no escaping.

The great Easter hymn **Victimae paschali laudes** which means “praises to the Pascal victim” sings, “Death and life have contended in that combat stupendous:  
The Prince of life, who died, reigns immortal.  
Christ indeed from death is risen, our new life obtaining.”

Anyone who looked upon the cross on Good Friday would think, “He was just like us. Life has been defeated again.” This is why the disciples are so disappointed on the way to Emmaus. It was to the women going to the tomb on Sunday that an angel appeared to tell them the Good News. “He is not here.” Seeing the empty tomb, at first they did not understand. Mary Magdalen asks, “Where did you put him?” This is because it is so unfathomable what has taken place. He was clearly dead. Now he is not. He was not just like us, thanks be to God for that. **“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.”**

This one was righteous and perfect and sinless. He was God among us, and he gave us a health food better than oregano oil. “Do this in memory of me,” he said, as he gave them bread. “My flesh is true food, food for the life of the world.” This is why we gather week after week, to remember what he has done for us, winning for us eternal life. It was in the breaking of the bread that the disciples on the road to Emmaus recognized and remembered Christ. This encounter set them on fire with excitement. “Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?” This is our encounter, every time we come, when the Spirit opens the word for us and makes present Christ in the breaking of the bread.

Then we leave here and we go back to the same world, full of suffering, work, toil, and disagreement. It seems nothing has changed, so we do not change, when in fact, if we changed, then the world would change.

Saint Paul reminds us that we should have before our minds that, “When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.” Therefore, we are to, “seek what is above” by celebrating “the feast, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

My dear friends in Christ, Easter invites us to understand our role in this great drama of redemption. Last night at the Easter Vigil, adults were newly baptized. Easter is seen as the appropriate time for this because the sacraments have their power from Christ’s death and resurrection. We renew our baptismal promises at the Vigil because we are remembering that sacraments do not just celebrate a historical reality but incorporate us into the Mystery. I said this on Holy Thursday but it bears repeating: when Christ tells us to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, the Greek is not “in the name of life” like an ambassador is sent in the name of a government. No, it is more like, “into.” We are baptized “into” God. We are incorporated into the Mystery. Therefore, this makes us not just witnesses but also sends us forth to heal a broken world, not by our own power but by the power of the Spirit.

May God bless you and your loved ones this Easter.