



*Diocese of Fall River*  
*Office of the Bishop*  
*Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.*

**Mother Nature and Easter Joy**

*“Look at the birds in the sky ... learn from the way the wild flowers grow” (Mt. 6:26, 28).*

When autumn arrives every year, we feel in the air and see all around us the changes taking place in nature. There is a festival of changing colors. Deep green turns into yellow, red, brown, and a few other shades in between. Then the leaves begin to fall and the trees lose their beauty. By late December, they are apparently lifeless. If we wonder why they lose their leaves, it is nature's way of protecting itself. The leaves fall to keep branches from breaking with the heavy snows of winter and also to protect the roots of the trees from freezing.

By now, we've gone through the short days and long nights of winter, but in the last few weeks we've seen our days getting longer and nights getting shorter. A few days ago, we celebrated the arrival of spring. Now, with spring here, we see new signs of life all around us. Grass will soon be turning green again; trees will soon be full of leaves; flowers will embellish our homes, lawns, sidewalks and parks everywhere. We know that the cold and darkness of winter is behind us. *“How varied are Your works, LORD! In wisdom You have made them all; the earth is full of Your creatures. Send forth Your spirit, they are created and You renew the face of the earth”* (Ps. 104:24, 30).

We need to learn a lesson from nature: *“This contemplation of creation allows us to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand onto us, since for the believer; to contemplate creation is to hear a message, to listen to a paradoxical and silent voice”* (St. John Paul II, Catechesis). Like nature preparing for the winter, we too, begin our Lenten season with the process of dying. We received ashes on Ash Wednesday as a sign of our own willingness to let go as we journey toward Easter. We move from the ashes of penance and dying, from the ashes of sin and selfishness, to the glory of new life and hope at Easter.

When we celebrate Easter, we go through a renewal in our lives, just as nature does. So, when you see the signs of new life this spring, when you feel the warmth of the sun, when you see flowers blossoming and leaves growing on trees, remember that God is inviting us to renew our lives as well. He is inviting us to leave behind the old self and fill ourselves with new hope. He wants us to share in Christ's Resurrection, but in order to share this glory, we need to let go, to let what is sinful and evil in us die so that we can live a new life with Him forever. Christ is our light, and with His grace we can pass from darkness to light, from sin to grace, from death to life.

*“He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away.” “Behold, I make all things new”* (Rev. 21:4, 5).

Indeed, even in the midst of what seems to be death and doom, darkness and ashes, life is just under the surface waiting to bloom, to blossom, to grow and bear fruit.

Jesus let go of His Godliness, emptied Himself, went through His darkness, suffering and dying, but God raised Him and brought Him back to life. If we hold to our faith and hope, God, our loving Father, will bring us also to a new life.

May the Lord Who rose victoriously from death, renew our faith and hope and fill us with joy and peace this Easter.

Happy Easter! *Feliz Páscoa! Feliz Pascua de Resurrección!*

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V.  
Bishop of Fall River

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**Sat. - Mar. 31 - Easter Vigil**

**7:30 PM** OLPH Parishioners  
Living & Deceased

**Sun. - Apr. 1 - Easter Sunday**

**10:00 AM** OLPH Parishioners  
Living & Deceased  
(Divine Mercy Novena, Day 3)

**Mon. - Apr. 2 - Monday of Easter Week**

**7:30 AM** +Marie & +Bill Parda  
(Divine Mercy Novena, Day 4)

**Tues. - Apr. 3 - Tuesday of Easter Week**

**7:30 AM** ++Family Members  
Req. Mother & Sister  
(Divine Mercy Novena, Day 5)

**Wed. - Apr. 4 - Wednesday of Easter Week**

**7:30 AM** Special Intention  
(Divine Mercy Novena, Day 6)

**Thurs. - Apr. 5 - Thursday of Easter Week**

**7:30 AM** +Joseph and +Caroline Masny  
(Divine Mercy Novena, Day 7)

**Fri. - Apr. 6 - Friday of Easter Week**

**7:30 AM** Health, God's Blessings, & Mercy  
(Divine Mercy Novena, Day 8)

**Sat. - Apr. 7 - Saturday of Easter Week**

**7:30 AM** +Suzanne Martin  
Req. Patti Palys  
(Divine Mercy Novena, Day 9)

**Sat. - Apr. 7 - Divine Mercy Sunday**

**4:00 PM** +Michael Willett (anniv.)  
Req. Ann Bodzioch Bojack

**Sun. - Apr. 8 - Divine Mercy Sunday**

**10:00 AM** +Rita Schemm  
Req. Tom and George

**CAN YOU HELP MAKE PIEROGI** for our upcoming June Festival? Next Saturday morning, April 7th, starting about 8 o'clock or so there will be a "preparing the cabbage" session. Then, on the following Tuesday, the 10th, also around 8 a.m., many "pinchers" and others will be needed to "put it all together." Even if you've never made a pierogi in your life, please consider coming down to the church hall and be part of the crew. It's easy, it's fun, and it's time well spent.

**A MESSAGE FROM FATHER CONRAD**

Brothers and Sisters of Our Parish Family,

Easter bunnies still capture the hearts of children, and schools talk about Spring break. But you and I know what really happened on that Easter morning and why we celebrate it.

For just a moment, let's mentally accompany Mary Magdalene to the tomb. She is preparing to anoint Jesus for His proper burial. Upon arriving, she sees that the tomb is open, stone pushed to the side, ashes of the Roman guards' fire still smoldering. "How can they be so cruel?" she cries out.

Then Mary sees Jesus and mistakes Him for the gardener. But there is no mistaking Jesus' familiar voice when He greets her, "Mary!"

In an instant, history changed forever, as Jesus stepped out of death into life. So, death is not the last word for Jesus' followers; life is !

Mary would tell us, "Jesus change my life." And billions around the world are able to echo, "Mine, too! He changed my life, too."

So, while religious leaders, e.g. Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, etc. etc., have come and gone, the fact is that only One has risen from the dead and stepped out of the tomb. Only One has conquered death. Only One offers the promise of eternal life to those who follow Him.

*"I am the Resurrection and the Life;" Jesus assures us , "whoever believes in Me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die."*

Peace and the Blessings of Christ our Risen Savior,  
Father Conrad

