

HE IS RISEN: SEEING JESUS WITH THE EYES OF FAITH

A NEW MESSAGE SERIES

This weekend we begin a new message series during the Easter season. Despite the challenging time we face with the COVID-19 pandemic, we still need to seek and deepen our faith. In fact, we need to fervently seek out God's grace as everything around seems to be falling apart, making us feel helpless and in free fall.

This is why this message series and the Easter season is so timely. We need to see Christ in the midst of our storms, and when we think there is nothing left, we can then truly see Jesus so much more clearly. This six week message series will help all of us be strengthened, empowered and healed by the presence of the Risen Lord who seeks to fulfill the hope of eternal life for all of us.

HAVING EYES OF FAITH

In order for us to see the Risen Christ in our world today—right in our homes and in others, we need to see with eyes of faith. Unfortunately, this is a lens that we don't often use in our daily routines. Science and technology have taken over as the primary sources of truth but it really is limited. Yes, we have advanced so much and have been able to do some amazing things to improve and even save our lives. But science and technology can only go so far. They do not answer the ultimate questions of our purpose and our destiny. Only faith can do that for us. What are our eyes of faith?

(1) CHILD LIKE INNOCENCE

It is so important for all of us to approach faith with a child like innocence and simplicity. To see Jesus our Risen Lord, we need to embrace the gift of the resurrection with wonder and awe, and not in scientific analysis. We need to enter into the mystery of faith not in some dense fog but gazing upon the rays of the sun deepening our relationship with Jesus and embracing the light he offers us. Just like the picture of the 16th Station of the Jasna Gora Way of the Cross (pictured above, entitled THOMAS), we are called to be like children receiving Jesus with open arms.

(2) A HUMBLE HEART

Another important aspect of having eyes of faith is the need to be humble and open when seeking the Risen Lord. We cannot have an agenda or demands from the Lord for our own purposes. We cannot control Jesus seeking to have him

fulfill our needs. We need to have a humble heart that is open to the various ways the Lord will connect with us beyond our expectations and circumstances. Jesus is full of joyful surprises and often will connect with us in ways that are subtle, requiring attention, openness and quiet.

We have to be patient and surrender

our expectations to that of the Lord who always wants what is best for us and calls us to follow him. We need to be humble and willing to let go of control to embrace his love for us and of course become the faithful disciples he empowers us to be.

(3) THE COURAGE TO TRUST

This weekend we celebrate DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY. We remember and celebrate the great mercy God has given us through the gift of Jesus.

This special weekend celebration has its roots in the revelations to St. Faustina, a Polish nun, who through her encounters with the Lord brought forth the image of DIVINE MERCY. The phrase associated with this devotion and revelation is **JESUS I TRUST IN YOU.**

For us to have the eyes of faith also means that we need to trust in the Lord. What we see, what we experience and where we are called when encountering Jesus challenges us to trust. The Lord will guide us often times in the direction that we don't want to go. Christ calls us to sacrifice, include some suffering and a surrender of our lives to him. None of this can happen unless we are transformed by his love. This can only happen if we see him with our hearts and souls. Seeing Jesus today, alive, around us and within us makes our Easter alleluia so much more meaningful!!

(4) ENTERING THE UNKNOWN

During Holy Week the parish hosted a special message series called

"THE UNKNOWN PATH TO EASTER". In this series we reflected on the fact that this Lenten and Easter season will be one that we will never forget due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have been taken down an unknown path, one that we did not want to travel and yet here we are. We are into the unknown, which can be frightening, difficult and painful. We all know this all too well by watching the news each day. What we are going through right now is still something completely unbelievable.

Our eyes of faith will beckon us to trustingly enter the unknown mystery of discipleship. Following Jesus and walking in his steps here and now will lead us down paths that are unknown, at times risky with unexpected challenges and graces around every corner. And yet, this is what we are called to do when walking with the eyes of faith. We fix our gaze on Jesus who will lead us through to a safe harbor, transforming us in the process.

THE JOURNEY AHEAD

This message series will help all of us see that Jesus is alive and that he walks with us along this challenging road. He has not abandoned us but guides us to still see the light of joy and the Easter morning. Jesus wants to show us that nothing can take away his love, mercy, peace and strength. Our true joy comes from the Lord and the gifts of others that he brings into our lives.

Take time during this Easter season and the message series to see the ways in which the Lord dwells with you. Take the time to embrace the Lord who seeks to send us out as bearers of the Good News that our world desperately needs to hear. It begins with our eyes of faith, being able to see Jesus here with us and sharing our story with those around us. May the resurrection inspire us to be faithful disciples!

