

**Easter Sunday 2016**  
**Casa Santa Maria – Rome**

The Lord is Risen! - answer?

- YES – this is the first time in 20 years of priesthood that I got the answer the first time! I usually have to teach it...
- NO – oh, come on – for 20 years I’ve had to teach my parishioners that... but you know the answer... Try again... The Lord is Risen! BETTER!

Yes, He is TRULY risen – and it has made all the difference for us – and for all people.

Not long before I arrived here in Rome – I arrived just a little over 2-weeks ago – a new faith-based movie came out in the States – the movie “Risen.” It’s the story of the Resurrection – but from a different perspective – from the eyes of a Roman military tribune – Clavius – who is tasked with finishing Jesus off at His crucifixion, then, after his body goes “missing,” of finding out what happened to it after He was placed in the tomb. The entire story is this search – this quest to discover the truth of what happened. What a twist for him (not for us, but for him) when he finally finds the apostles in that upper room – barges in – only to see Jesus sitting in their midst – ALIVE!

Clavius says something in the film that has provoked much thought and reflection in my prayer this past week... As he falls back in disbelief at seeing Jesus alive, he says, “I’ve seen 2 things my mind cannot reconcile: I saw a man dead – now I see Him alive.”

That is the ultimate contradiction, no? The One who was dead now lives again! It is the ancient contradiction of the Cross – it is the contradiction of God’s triumph over death – it is the contradiction of our lives in the face of this world.

The Sequence today spoke of that contradiction – “Death and life have contended in that combat stupendous: the Prince of life, who died, reigns immortal!” And the Psalm – This is the day the Lord has made – it is wonderful in our eyes.”

This triumph, of course, is not OUR doing – it is God’s work of re-creation – of bringing life from death – joy from despair – love from hatred.

This is the ESSENCE of this Jubilee Year of Mercy – GOD’S incredible, incomprehensible mercy – rooted in his lavish – unrestrained – love poured out for us.

His Eminence spoke of this love on Thursday night at the Mass of the Lord's Supper – as he recalled for us the Love of God that the Eucharist – and the priesthood – revealed to us.

The cross of Good Friday – a stumbling block to the Jews – an absurdity to the Greeks – again reveals that love to us.

And today that love is poured – good measure, pressed down [into the tomb] flowing over, is poured into our laps! And it is WONDERFUL in our eyes!

This great contradiction between life and death – hatred and joy – sin and mercy – continues to confront each of us all every single day – and it continues to confront our society and our world. Just as Clavius could not reconcile the One he saw dead, but now sees alive... how do we, and our world:

- reconcile death and life?
- how do we reconcile terror (as we've seen so horrifically) and love?
- how do we reconcile sin and mercy?

Only one way – and that is in Jesus Christ, Risen from the dead.

As our Holy Father told us priests at the Chrism Mass – all of us (not just priests) all of us must reconcile in our own lives the realities we face:

- the truth of our sinfulness – yet the abundant and overflowing love of the Merciful Father.
- The truth of our failures to show love and mercy – yet the never-failing love and mercy shown to us by our Risen Lord.
- We each have to come to reconcile those personal realities...

In order that we can ourselves become SIGNS of contradiction to our world:

- Where there is hatred, let me show love
- Where injury, pardon
- Where doubt, faith,
- Where despair, hope
- Where darkness, light
- Where sadness, joy...

THEN we become channels of God's peace, of God's love – and channels God's mercy.

Saint Paul today, in the letter to the Colossians said, "When Christ your life appears..." He HAS appeared!

The Collect asked God that, "...we [may] through the renewal brought by your Spirit, rise up to the light of life."

This is the Risen life to which God calls us – even in the midst of the contradiction of death and fear, of terror and hopelessness... that WE be witnesses to the Contradiction of the Cross.

Clavius – in the movie – faced with the contradiction, had to make a choice... to deny what he has seen and return to his life, or to believe from his heart and follow. He chose to follow.

Do we? Well, yes, of course we have chosen to follow – yet there are so many ways in which the contradiction of our sins can discourage us from following – from allowing ourselves to be signs of contradiction to our world.

The death our eyes have seen has become the life that guides our lives in love:

- to personally experience that love
- and to share that love by allowing our lives to become signs of the Divine Contradiction.

But today, Easter Sunday, we are "renewed by the Spirit" – seeing Christ our life, risen, we realize that "the battle is 'or, the victory won." This IS the day the Lord has made – it IS wonderful in our eyes.

The Lord is TRULY risen – and it makes all the difference.