

# HOMILY ~ EASTER

## MARCH 30/31, 2024

There was a young boy named Jack. When he was about five years old, he asked his father, *"How big is God?"* His father said, *"That depends."* Just then a plane was flying overhead. He asked his son, *"How big do you think the plane is?"* Jack said, *"It looks very small."* A couple days later, Jack's father took him to the airport to see a plane up close. He asked his son, *"How big does the plane look now?"* Jack said, *"It is huge!"* His father said, *"It is like God. How big he looks depends upon how close you are to him."* Today is Easter, and we celebrate the good news of our faith. Jesus suffered on the cross, died and rose for our salvation. He is living among us, sustaining our lives and caring for us all of the time. How big is that news to you? I think it depends upon how close you are to God.

In the Gospel Reading as the women were walking to the tomb to anoint Jesus, they were wondering who would roll back the stone for them. As it turns out, God rolled back the stone for them. Are there stones in our lives that we need to roll back so that we can get closer to God? One of the stones that we may need to roll back is that we are busy all of the time and overscheduled. This makes it difficult to think about God, to pray or to have any interior life at all. Cell phones are an issue. A recent study shows that on average, we touch our phones 2,617 times a day and spend more than five hours browsing. And we do not have 15 to 30 minutes a day during the week to spend getting closer to God in prayer? We do not have an hour on Sunday to come to Mass? Really?

Another stone that we may need to roll back is that we do not spend much time living in the present. We spend far too much time ruminating about the past that we cannot change and worrying about what may happen in the future that we cannot control. In the meantime, we miss living our lives. If we are going to see how God wants to help us in our lives, we have to be in the present. When they asked Jesus who he is he responded, **"I am"** not **"I was"** not **"I will be"** but **"I am."** We can only encounter God in the present. We all have storms in our lives. God can give us peace in the midst of the storm as we solve the problems with him.

Another stone that we may need to roll back is the stone that prevents us from entering into relationships with people. It started with our cell phones and social media. You say you have friends on Facebook, but these

are not your friends. When you need to be with someone when you are grieving or you need someone to take you for a medical procedure, you are not going to Facebook. We were driven into isolation during COVID, and many of us have not come completely back. We need to be with people physically. We have allowed virtual relationships to replace real relationships. That is why we have an epidemic of loneliness, anxiety and depression in our country today. God works through the people in our lives. I am not sure how well God can work through social media.

Another stone that may need to be rolled back is the stone that prevents us from joining together in community. So many of us are working from home. We are allowing virtual gatherings to replace real gatherings. There is no commute and it is more convenient, but what are we giving up? We have forgotten how to relate to one another and how to accept differences of opinion. We are moving toward a culture that says, *"If you do not agree with me, you are clearly wrong and you become the evil other."* Church is one place where we still have community. We gather together, share a common faith, worship together and receive the Eucharist. We can certainly pray at home, I do all of the time; but when my faith is weak, it is strengthened when I come into community with all of you. Because we share a common faith and worship, because we share the Eucharist, we are better able to understand our differences. As I look out over the congregation, I know many of you and I have heard your point of view. This diversity of opinions enriches our lives. We all need to have a group of people where we belong. We welcome everyone who wants to belong at St. Edith. We have many activities going on at St. Edith. Check out our bulletin. We have hospitality after just about everything so we can get to know one another. Some of us just got out of the habit of coming to Church during COVID. Maybe it is time to come back.

Easter is a time of renewal. Maybe it is time to get closer to God. We all have storms in our lives. Alone we can cry during the storms. With God and with one another, we can dance in the rain while we solve the problems together. Your choice.

Love and Peace,

Fr. Jim