

HOMILY EASTER

April 4, 2021

It is good to see all of you here today to celebrate the greatest event in human history, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the tomb. I hope you came here today ready to celebrate. We have something else to celebrate this Easter. We are coming out of this horrible pandemic. We can see the light at the end of the tunnel with the rolling out of the vaccine. So I have been asking myself: Why do I feel so exhausted, detached and apathetic? Some days I have memory problems. Some days I have a short fuse and some days I feel depressed and cannot seem to get anything done. I am excited about moving forward, but I also feel fearful as well. Some days I think I am losing my mind. If you have experienced these feelings, I am here to tell you that you are not losing your mind. All of these feelings are normal at this time, and I am going to tell you why. We all have an autonomic nervous system; and when we feel threatened, it kicks in with what we commonly refer to as a fight or flight response. This response is automatic and not at the conscious level. Your body produces certain hormones, your heart rate and blood pressure increase and you have increased glucose levels. This is normally a very good response. It keeps us safe and alive. We are prepared to fight if necessary or take flight if the situation appears to be overwhelming. The problem with this pandemic is that threat has never gone away. This fight of flight response has just been triggered over and over again. And this is not just the threat of getting sick; it is all of the other things that have gone along with the pandemic, the isolation, the fact that nothing seems normal. No wonder we feel the way that we do. But we also have a parasympathetic nervous system that is on a conscious and intellectual level that can calm us down and bring us back to a balanced state.

On that first Easter morning, I think the disciples were at a similar place where we find ourselves today. Remember they just lived through Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. They must have felt hopeless after the crucifixion. It appeared that Jesus' ministry and promise was all for nothing, a total failure; and they also feared for their own lives. How many times do you think their fight or flight response was automatically triggered? And they were totally taken off guard by the Resurrection. It must have been

disconcerting and frightening to discover the stone already rolled away and the tomb empty. But they came to see the light at the end of the tunnel. One step at a time, they figured out that Jesus had risen from the dead. This was not the end but the beginning. They kept themselves locked in the upper room for a while so they could figure things out. I am sure they felt excitement about moving forward but fearful as well. And they knew that they did not have to do it alone. They knew that they could continue to move forward with Jesus' help.

We have to remember that as well. Jesus is alive and he is walking with us. God brought order out of total chaos when he created this fabulous world that we live in. He gave us the intellect to recognize and count on that order. We know that the sun will rise and set every day. I do not think we could have developed these safe and highly effective vaccines in record breaking speed without God's help. And for those who are fully vaccinated, we have new life. We can gather together with others who have been fully vaccinated in private homes without masks and without social distancing. And we can touch and hug one another. Those of us who have been fully vaccinated may have to push ourselves to move forward a little. We have been living a restricted life for a year. I have been fully vaccinated, and I pushed myself to do a few things that I have not done for a year. I went to a barber shop to get my hair cut, I went out to dinner inside and I stopped at the drug store to pick up a few items. But the pandemic is not over. We know what we need to do to keep ourselves and one another safe. We will slowly move out of our upper rooms; but as we do, let's not forget the lessons we learned during the pandemic: the importance of the people that we have been sheltering with; the importance of friends and family that we need to reestablish relationships with; the importance of reconnecting with our St. Edith Parish Family; the importance of our solitude and the quiet time we can spend with the Lord; and how important it has been to slow down the treadmill of life. Know that you are not losing your mind, that there are reasons for the way you feel. Understand that we are all feeling a little out of it these days and be kind and compassionate with yourself and one another. God is with us. Jesus is alive. We are coming through this pandemic together. Look for the new life of Easter.