

Easter Sunday

Homily: Fr. Shijo George

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Winners don't do different things. They do things differently.

The grandiose Easter celebration brings out the life of Jesus who amazed the world with His Salvific work that was delivered in an unexpected way. He was completely different in people's eyes. The same people who witnessed His death engraved in their minds that the Story of Jesus had come to an end. Even the disciples who were with Jesus started to go about their old businesses. In their minds, their expectations and efforts had all been in vain. The drama is over. We see the grieving women carrying spices to embalm Jesus' body. No more hopes. The wind had turned into a corpse. This would have been the assumption of any ordinary person who had witnessed His death.

But the twist in the outcome went beyond their expectations. Jesus, who did things differently, broke all natural rules and ordinary expectations. The huge stone of the Tomb was removed. Death could not hide him in the Tomb of Silence eternally. Falsehoods could not suppress the Truth forever. "Death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55). He conquered death by His Resurrection. Indeed, He is resurrected. Hallelujah!

Similarly, the last moment of Socrates' life was amazement for his opponents. The authorities had intended to kill Socrates by giving him hemlock poison. They asked Socrates, who sat fearlessly with the poisoned goblet in his hand: "How should you be buried?" Drinking all the poison from the cup, Socrates boldly said: "You cannot bury me! The way I have chosen to live will make me immortal." The life that Jesus lived; the death, that he chose in full obedience to the Father; and His great sacrifice beyond all human comprehension made the whole world remember Him forever.

"We are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song!"

This was spoken by Pope St. John Paul II during his papal trip to Australia in 1986.

As Easter People, we are called not to live in fear or despair, but to live with hope and great faith. As with our Master, we are also blessed and called to do things differently. *Easter People* have a different outlook to daily problems, difficulties, pains, sufferings, and the tragedies of life. We may have had the opportunity to meet such people, who live as *Easter People*.



I like to share the beautiful life of a person, ‘Pinky’. His real name is George, who died just a few days ago. I came to know him through Fr. Thomas Chinnappa, the pastor of the Church of the Ascension in Parksville.

Pinky was the sacristan at the Parksville parish. From 2022, a tragic cancer affected his life. As part of the treatment, they removed a part of his tongue. This made it difficult for him to speak. He survived by using feeding tubes for the last two years of his life. Whenever I visited him, I noticed that this man, Pinky, had a different vibe and approach to life. He was always so happy to welcome us, chat and laugh with us, and would very readily hug us. Each time we prayed for him, I could not see a single trace or moment of despair, or tears, on his face. He always liked and looked forward for us to come for a visit again; to spend time with him and to pray for him.

I remember the last day that I visited him; it was on April 7, a Monday. After celebrating Holy Mass at Courtenay for the Syro-Malabar community there, I went to Parksville. That was when Fr. Thomas informed me that Pinky had been moved into hospice care. That Monday, we both visited him at hospice. When we arrived, there he was: Pinky, with a smiling face. On the whiteboard in his room was written as the first sentence: “Pinky Loves God and he likes to watch the channel EWTN.” We proceeded to spend about half an hour praying together. At the end, both priests blessed him and he hugged us with an intense joy, saying that we would meet after Easter. However, in the early morning of April 9, a Wednesday, I received a message from Fr. Thomas: “Pinky died, please pray for his soul.”

I think, the life and attitude of Pinky is a clear example that teaches us about being *Easter People*. It is in keeping joy, hope, and peace ever present in us, through the worst situations and challenges that may arise in life.

“... anyone who has heard the Easter proclamation can no longer go around with a tragic expression on his face and lead the humourless existence of a man who has no hope.” (Barth, Karl, 1959, *Dogmatics in Outline*, p. 123, Harper Perennial, UK.)