

April 5, 2026—The Resurrection of the Lord—Easter Sunday

One of the seven Last Words that Jesus spoke from the Cross, was “**I thirst**”. Of all the suffering that He was enduring—scourged from head to toe, beaten, nailed to the Cross—why would He single out thirst to speak about? Remember, that it took great effort to lift His diaphragm to speak while hanging from the Cross. Like all the words and actions of Jesus, there is always a deeper meaning than what appears on the surface. All that He was doing by His Sacred Passion was directed to the salvation of souls and reconciling us to the Heavenly Father. He was thirsting, that is, desiring souls to be redeemed. He was putting forth maximum effort in His human nature united to His divine nature to bring about that reconciliation with God!

Earlier in Jesus’ ministry, He said. “**If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water’**” (John 7:37-38). If we thirst, that is, desire salvation and mercy and grace we should seek Jesus. Among the 4 Gospel writers, St. John alone, mentioned the piercing of His Sacred Heart by the soldier’s spear. He proclaimed that he was an eyewitness to this event and quoted two passages from the Old Testament that foretold it. He told us, blood and water flowed forth from His pierced Heart. St. Ambrose wrote about it this way: “**Drink of Christ, for He is the fountain of life. Drink of Christ, for He is the stream whose torrents brought joy to the city of God. Drink of Christ, for He is peace. Drink of Christ, for the streams of living water flow from His heart.**”

The Fathers of the Church quickly made the connection between the piercing of the Sacred Heart and the living waters of grace that come from the sacraments. St. Augustine put it simply: “**When Christ is dead, the spear pierces His side that the sacraments may flow forth whereby the Church is formed.**” The sacrificial love of Jesus flows from the Cross, through the sacraments directly to us. The sacraments are the direct link to the supernatural life that God gave us to help us throughout our lives. They are effective signs that allow us to participate in the death and resurrection of Jesus each time we receive them. That is why we value them so much. They are indispensable to our salvation.

The Easter Vigil is the most important Holy Mass of the liturgical year. At this Mass we recall the great plans that God slowly revealed throughout salvation history to redeem us from the sin of Adam. It culminates in the resurrection of Jesus after His Passion and death upon the Cross. It is most fitting at the Easter

Vigil to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation: baptism, confirmation and Holy Communion. There are **6 people who will receive all three sacraments**: Holden Burch, Grant Lee, Allix Lee, Dawn Samson, Josiah Samson, Hadley Samson; (Owen) Samson will be baptized and receive his first Holy Communion. **Two others were baptized in the Catholic Church as infants** and will receive Confirmation and Holy Communion: Brittany Fear and Kris Samson. **One was baptized in another Christian denomination** and will be received into the Catholic Church and receive Confirmation and Holy Communion: Dennis King. The reception of these sacraments is a great moment in their faith journey. We who have already received the Easter Sacraments and can be united with our Lord in His Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist each Sunday or even daily, can be inspired by their commitment to the Catholic Church and their desire to follow Jesus each day for the rest of their lives.

The Resurrection of Jesus is the final and complete victory over sin and death. The Gospels tell us about the empty tomb with the burial wrappings left behind. We heard the witness of Mary Magdalene and the other women who went to the tomb early on Easter Sunday morning and the 10 apostles who saw the risen Christ in the Upper Room where the Last Supper took place on Easter Sunday evening. Also, the two disciples who were walking on the road to Emmaus when the risen Jesus appeared at their side; they did not recognize Him until they sat down for dinner, and He broke the bread like He did at the Last Supper and then disappeared before their very eyes. This reminds us that we are not to look for Jesus in His risen Body, but in His Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist.

Even though the victory of Jesus is complete as the Head of the Church, it is not yet complete in us, the members of the mystical Body of Christ. It began for us in Baptism, but we are still in a time of testing and spiritual growth and must persevere in the faith until God calls us from this life. The Sacraments Jesus instituted give us a new birth and strengthen and purify us on the journey of life; they are meant to assist us on each step of the way. They remind us that we are not alone, but that Jesus is walking at our side to guide us.

At Easter, we all renew our baptismal vows and recommit ourselves to following Jesus, truly risen as He promised, alleluia, alleluia.