Now we are his witnesses. Acts 10:37

Last night, at St. Peter Chanel church, we had the most wonderful Easter vigil Mass. Commencing with our Easter fire, we processed into the church, and sang the exultet – the proclamation of Easter joy . We listened to scripture readings from creation to the resurrection. We baptized two new adult members into our community and received a further nine adults into full communion with the Catholic Church.

I can't remember us receiving so many people into the church. In one sense it is certainly good news for us as a community - to know that we are growing – to know that people want to join us !. Each of those adults had arrived at this point, encouraged by the witness of others in our parish and other committed Christian people in their lives. Together, we then joined in celebrating the central Christian message that Christ is risen. God, in the person of Jesus has shown to us that we can claim victory in life , even over death, and we can have the hope of eternal life.

Today's Gospel recalls the events of the first Easter morning. When Mary Magdalene came to the tomb, she discovered that Jesus body was no longer there. She ran to Peter and the other disciple, - the one Jesus loved, and gave witness to what she had seen . The disciples then went to look for themselves. The Scripture then says of the disciple who Jesus loved - he saw and he believed. Who was that disciple that Jesus loved ? Tradition says it was John. Who is the disciple that Jesus loves today – each and every one of us . Until that point, they had failed to fully understand the teaching of Scripture. But now they realized that what Jesus and Scriptures had said about rising from the dead , had in fact come true. Jesus had risen from the dead.

In our first reading we hear how Peter responded to this good news of a risen Christ. Peter travelled everywhere sharing the good news. In the thriving Mediterranean Sea port of Caesarea, Peter shared the good news with a centurion - a captain in the Roman Regiment- based there. Peter shared what he had experienced – how Jesus went about doing good. How he was anointed with God's Holy Spirit and with power. How he was killed, but afterwards raised to life. How he ordered them to proclaim his resurrection so that all who believe in Jesus would have Eternal life . While he was still speaking, the Holy Spirit came down on all those who were listening to his message. They were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. These were the first Gentiles to receive the Holy Spirit.

In the next seven weeks, we will hear readings telling of the continuing story of the early church, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. It is a wonderful story of people who joyfully accepted the salvation offered by Jesus and confidently went about sharing their faith with others.

I wish you could've seen the excitement and joy that the new disciples in our community showed last night. I'm sure they are going to be great witnesses for Jesus themselves.

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And all they will need to do will be to share their story of what they witnessed and experienced in their journey to Easter.

Easter is the highest point of our church year , because we too remember what Jesus has done for us . There is no greater love that we can receive, no greater joy that we can experience ,no greater peace that we can have , than to know that we share in the divine life of God, as followers of Jesus . Im really happy about that . I hope you can be too.

In the Catholic leader this week Archbishop John sends us a message – may the whole Archdiocese be filled with the joy of the risen Christ . Bishop Brian Heenan , puts out a challenge to us . Will you be my witness. Jesus needs each one of us to share our faith hope and love .

If we are happy with what we have received of course we need to be prepared to share that faith hope and love as well. We don't need to be theologians to do that , we just need to share our experience , like Peter did with Cornelius. And in doing so , the Holy Spirit will come on line and touch people's hearts.

Today we are the disciples that Jesus loves . He has given us a good news story to share. But if we would but reflect a little on our daily lives, we might see even more clearly how Jesus is present there as well .Each of us has a story to share of God acting in our own lives. May we recapture the enthusiasm of the early church to be his witnesses.

May we do that in the joy expressed in the words of last nights Exultet . The light of Christ surrounds us; the love of Christ enfolds us; the power of Christ protects us; . The presence of Christ, watches over us.

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