

EASTER-MORE THAN BUNNIES AND CANDY... Recently, I heard a story about young Ernie. Ernie and his family were invited to have Easter Sunday dinner at his grandmother's house. Everyone was seated around the table as the food was being served. When Ernie received his plate, he immediately started eating. His father said "Ernie, please wait until we say grace!" "I don't have to," the five year old replied. "Of course you do, Ernest," his mother insisted rather forcefully; "You know we always say a prayer before eating at our house." "Well, that's at our house," Ernie explained, "But this is grandma's house and she knows how to cook!" I wonder if Ernie got any Easter candy? Well today we celebrated the greatest feast of the Christian year-the Feast of Easter, the Feast of the Resurrection. It was the great St. Augustine who said: "We are Easter people and Alleluia is our song!" Easter means that Christ is alive, that he has triumphed over the grave. This is indeed the good news of Christianity. A question that we might all ask ourselves is, "Are we Good Friday Christians or Easter Sunday Christians?" A Good Friday Christian is the sort of a person who only focuses solely on the cross, on the pains and sufferings of life and God knows that all of us have enough of those! However, an Easter Sunday Christian is one who is filled with joy knowing that although there was a cross on Good Friday, that after the cross, there was victory and there was redemption, for there was an empty tomb on that third day. In his Apostolic Letter, "The Joy of the Gospel" Pope Francis said, "There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter." As followers of Jesus he reminds us that joy must be part of our lives. The joy of Easter trumps the sadness of Good Friday! When the women came to our Lord's tomb on Easter Sunday morning, they found the large stone that had covered the tomb, rolled away. At times in our lives, we need to ask the Lord to roll away the "Stones" from our lives, the stones of unbelief, the stones of skepticism, the stones of discouragement and despair. We should also remember something; that when it came to the Resurrection of Jesus, the greatest unbelievers and doubters were the First Apostles themselves. However, once they were convinced of the reality of Christ's rising from the dead, and then nothing could stop them! The Scriptures tell us "That with great power the apostles bore witness to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and they suffered martyrdom for their belief. As Christian disciples of the twenty first century we are called to bear witness to the risen Savior, I think that most of us know that many more people come out to church on this Easter day than at any other time of the year-except maybe for Christmas perhaps. A pastor of a parish had a couple that he liked very much but he only saw them at Christmas and at Easter Masses. So after greeting them at the door of the church following Easter Sunday Mass, he said "You two need to join the army of the Lord!" The priest said, "Well then how come I only see you at Christmas and Easter?" They answered, "We're in the Secret Service!" Today we welcome all who come to church for the feast of the Lord's Resurrection. There is nothing "Secret" about our joy on this day. Christ is risen and has triumphed over the grave! Alleluia! A blessed Easter to you and your families.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Jerome