



## ASCENDING LIFE- CANADA

### WALKING THE EASTER PATH

*“He is not here, but has Risen! Alleluia!*

*We wish you and your loved ones  
the Peace of Easter!  
May the risen Christ walk with you in the  
season of joy and always!*

***Pope Francis asked us in his Ash Wednesday homily to think about where we are heading on the journey of life.***

Formed by our Lenten resolutions and with Easter eyes we have hope to see more clearly the contours of the journey for ourselves and for others. “No matter where we are in life, we are somewhere on the Easter Path!” Joseph Simmer SJ.

***‘I am the way, the truth, and the life!’*** (John14:6)

Over the days of Lent we have attempted to follow Christ more intentionally in our lives. At the end of this journey, let us read Pope Francis’ Ash Wednesday homily!-

In it offers an explanation of how we are doing as followers of Christ, the Way.

“On this journey of life do I seek the way forward?  
Am I satisfied with living in the moment and thinking only of feeling good,  
solving some problems and having fun?

*What is the path? Is it the search for health, which so many today say comes first?  
Could it be possessions of well-being?*

*We are not in the world for this. “Return to me,” says the Lord. To Me!  
The Lord is the goal or our journey in this world.  
The direction must lead to him.”*

There are many paths we might tread in life and the curves in the road might conceal the intended destination. If Jesus is “the way”, how can we be sure that we are on the right path? We cannot foresee unexpected challenges, but we can ready ourselves to walk true and keep our footing when we encounter those bends in the road.

The Holy week march from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday was not predictable either. It begins with Jesus’ early success and acclaim on Palm Sunday and his triumphant procession into Jerusalem, and before long the joy leads to sad confusion as the palmist cries, “My God, My God, why have you abandoned me!”

Often that is the way life works: ticking along just fine and then we learn....severe illness in the family or read of the fire at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, or the bombing and loss of life in Sri Lanka and we endure a new flavor of grief.

On Jesus’ journey, he faces the sadness of betrayal, his devoted companions abandoning him. He is mocked, rejected. He undergoes physical and mental abuse. On the journey of life we lose loved ones, unseen losses, death of relationships, jobs, hopes, youthful optimism, and trust.

**Easter reminds us, “There is Good News!”**

Jesus reminds us, “Do not let your hearts be troubled: have faith in God and faith in me! I will go forth to prepare a place for you, and I will come back and take you with me, that where I am you will also be! That where I am going, you will know the way!” (John 14 1-4)

To follow the way means we are not afraid to walk the full course of our own lives.

What is the joy that comes from Easter?

“All life is infused with new purpose because Jesus has undergone death and risen to new life!”

We are an “Easter People” means that no matter where we are in life, we are always somewhere on the Easter Path!

Let us examine, through prayer over the stuff in our lives to discover whereabouts we are on that path with Jesus!

In the same Ash Wednesday homily Pope Francis reminds us we don’t walk alone; there are fellow travelers along the way. The three disciplines of Lent—prayer, almsgiving, and fasting—keeps us in touch with ‘three realities that do not fade away’

**Prayer unites us to God; charity, to our neighbor, fasting, to ourselves.  
God, my neighbor, my life: these are the realities that do not fade away  
and in which we must invest.**

May we remember that everyone we meet is also somewhere on their own Easter path, whether they would recognize it or not. We are all children Of God and the Easter path changes how we see them. Perhaps, with Easter eyes we can be a source of solidarity and encouragement for everyone we encounter on the journey of life.

**The Lord is the goal of our journey in the world, Pope Francis reminded us.  
The direction must lead to him. As we tread the journey of life,  
let us trust that the Risen Lord will camber the path ahead,  
and walk with us each step of the way.  
Happy Easter, one and all.**



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### Fourth Sunday of Easter

*“I have called each of you by name,  
you are mine, do not be afraid.  
You are precious to me and I love you.”*



Jesus does not force us to listen to his voice when he calls. We are invited to follow him freely. The choice to respond or not, is ours. We may take our time responding, but Jesus will never stop calling us by name, he will wait until we do respond.

The call of Jesus offers us not only the fullness of life; he offers us the fullness of *his* life here and now not in the distant future.

May we, as we continue this journey through Easter in preparation for the celebration of Pentecost realize how deeply and personally Jesus loves us!

When Jesus calls us by name, may we answer in faith, gratitude and gracefulness! May we follow where he leads us!

*“A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy I came that they may have life and have it more abundantly.” John 10.10*

Jesus lives amongst all he has called by name uniting us as one, bringing us together, and leading us forward together as brothers and sisters; sharing, and rejoicing together as a flock, a flock of the Good Shepherd. Jesus!

Life in abundance is not just about each of us enjoying himself or herself in the comfort of his or her own solitude. Life in abundance means sharing with others the life that we receive, seeing each other as a gift.

\*It means taking the time to encounter one another, even in little ways. Name some ways.

It means taking a moment for an unexpected conversation instead of wishing you were left undisturbed. Have you ever felt that way? Have you ever encountered another wishing solitude? How did you react?

All these things bring us together as a flock. They show us that we are not alone.

Simple gestures can show others that they are not alone either. Perhaps you alone can ponder or in a group can ponder how you can help others realize they need never be alone. Discuss

Jesus continues His work being our Good Shepherd through His Church. We are his church. Jesus uses us to try and lead others through life in this world.

There is a German hymn, “He who believes is never alone.” Also a French saying, “A Christian alone is a Christian in danger.”

We do not live our faith in isolation, Jesus does not just relate to us, we are members of a flock. We belong to one another and together we belong to Christ

We are sometimes scattered, divided but Jesus seeks to bring us together to unite us in one fold. He wants to bring all humanity together and He uses us as instruments of this peace and unity.

Jesus’ image of the Good Shepherd reveals to us who He is, for each of us and for all of us together. It shows us how He is at work in this world, bringing us to Himself and uniting us together.

Have you seen His work being done in this world? Name a few.

*“Before the many sufferings of our time may the Lord of life not find us cold and indifferent! May he make us builders of bridges, not walls!”*

*Pope Francis’ Urbi et Orbi Message for Easter Sunday*

As Christians we are called to “See differently.” We’re invited to look at a world which seems to have gotten so out of hand and believe Jesus still has his sheep well in hand. We view the misery and poverty of people on the streets and refuse to be paralyzed into inaction. We are aware of the violence in our society, and the violence we harbor in hearts is definitely related. We perceive that all the world’s children are our children. Others may tell us that they are getting what they deserve, and not to waste our pity on the disenfranchised or marginalized ones. But we, who deserve condemnation and get mercy instead, can’t be so smug.



We are in the hands of the Good Shepherd who speaks gently of life and hope.

How can we see those perishing around us and NOT see how the world can and must be different?

What are the world’s problems in this day and age?

How can we respond to God’s Call to be builders of bridges?

***Lord, I thank You for Your unwavering support of me as my Shepherd  
I thank You for those who act as Your instruments of this deep love and  
commitment. Help me to fulfill my role of shepherding Your people,  
the people you have placed in my life.***

***May I never run from the glorious responsibility You have called me to.  
Jesus I trust in You. Amen***