

**Bishop Daniel Jodoin's Homely for  
Easter Sunday – April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020**  
**From the Saint-Pierre-aux-Liens church in Caraquet**  
*(Broadcasted on the radio at 94,1 fm CKLE CJVA  
and Live on the Diocese of Bathurst Facebook page)*

I do not know about you, but when I was in elementary school, one of the activities the teacher asked us to do at the start of Holy Week was to paint eggs to give to our parents at Easter. I remember we had to be very careful because the shells were so fragile. We were a little rowdy then. In some countries, painting eggs is an art and then they are blessed at Easter Mass before being offered as gifts. However, where does the custom of offering eggs, colored or chocolate, at Easter or hunt for Easter eggs come from?

Two reasons exist. The first is this: the egg is made of limestone. It looks like a tomb, a whitewashed sepulcher: symbol of death. Nevertheless, from this egg life will arise: a chick, a bird that will fly away. It is always amazing to see a tiny little chick break its shell and come out full of life. Life emerges from this tomb. Exactly like Christ who, from the cross, was put in a tomb walled with a large stone. Nevertheless, on Easter night he came out alive. So Christ, this Son of God who became our brother, who died on a cross out of love for us, here he is, he conquered death, He was resurrected thanks to the force of the God's love. What wonderful and grand news! This is the joy of Easter which makes us live as Christians! But one can ask the following question: is seeing the open and empty tomb the only sign that aroused the faith of the apostles? Not according to St. John, there was another.

Mary Magdalen, Peter and John all saw the empty tomb but only John believed! Because someone could have opened and emptied the tomb by stealing the body of Jesus as many have claimed. If John believed, it was because he saw the cloths that enveloped the body, that is to say the strips, laid flat and the shroud that surrounded the head, rolled apart in its place. If we had wanted to steal the body of Jesus, we would not have bothered to unroll the body of all these strips, roll up the shroud and then arrange them and in their proper place. No, we would have fled as quickly as possible with the body so as not to be seen. Finding these strips well in place also demonstrates that Christ came out of the tomb totally liberated, delivered from these tissues of death (unlike Lazarus who, coming back only to life, came out of the tomb still imprisoned by these strips that others had to undo for him). In addition, John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, saw the scene with his heart. Inhabited by love, we

always want to believe that those we love are still alive. He was the first to believe that the God's Love could be stronger than death.

Having left the tomb, Christ returned to his Father as the Son of God of course, but also now as our brother: Son of God but also human like us. This is wonderful news, because we too can follow the same path that Christ opened in the wall of death and rise like Him.

The risen Christ is the life force that brings us out of the tombs in which we are too often locked up in: our fears, our past, the prejudices of others, an unhappy life and countless other tombs we may take refuge in. With the risen Christ, one can come out and be reborn.

The second reason for the Easter egg tradition comes from the fact that when you break an egg, you find a round yellow yolk in its center that reminds us of light, sunlight a life-giving source and the egg white, which recalls the cloud, a sign of the presence of God. Christ is indeed our sun. He has overcome the darkness of the tomb to be the light of the world. Christ had also proclaimed, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness; he will have the light of life." It all happened in Easter night.

Christ being the light of the world, the first disciples waited for his return by praying towards the rising sun. In French, we even changed the day of the week dedicated to the sun with a new name: "Dimanche, jour du Seigneur" for Sunday, Lord's day (from Dominus in Latin which means Lord). The other days have kept their reference to the planets: Monday "Lundi" (Moon "lune" day); Tuesday "Mardi" (Mars day); Wednesday "Mercredi" (Mercury day); Thursday "Jeudi" (Jupiter day); Friday "Vendredi" (Venus day) and Saturday "Samedi" (Saturn day). In English, the planetary reference for the day of the Sun, Sunday, was kept.

Yes, the risen Christ is this sun, which in our lives drives out our darkness, our dark moments when everything seems lost without hope: mourning, depression, discouragement, a pain of love, a failure, a suffering. He is the light that guides us on the right path, which enlightens our conscience and which allows us to see ourselves with the eyes of God.

We cannot all be gathered in the church to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ this Easter. We will also be deprived of sharing a good family meal with those we love. However, rest assured that the risen Christ is there. He is with you, near you at

your table, to share with you his risen Life. He is in your hearts as a light of peace and love. He will be a source of strength, healing and hope to help you get out of all your tombs, including the tomb of the current pandemic. Let us be joyful this Easter and share the Good News of the Resurrection of Christ with the same ardor as the first disciples. Now, whenever you see an egg, think of the Resurrection of Christ and your resurrection also! Amen