

This Month's Liturgy; April 2019

Are We Nearly There Yet is a familiar cry, heard on family outings the world over but as we pass from March to April we might be feeling that about our Easter celebrations – it does seem to have been a particularly long Lent but of course it hasn't been... it's just that it is such a late Easter Day this year (April 21st).

Of course it begs a question; where is '**THERE**'? When asked from the back seat of the car, this can be a question about the arrival at a physical place, the end of this particular stage of the journey. Understood in this sense, the place of arrival could be the end of our Lenten privations and return to the things we have 'given up' for Lent, the Easter Day and Eastertide celebrations themselves or the beginning an Easter break from school or work. And yet there must be something greater than this, or else it can just be seen as doing the same things year in year out – just a cycle, albeit a virtuous one!

I expect the bigger and most fundamental question is not, ***are we there yet?*** but ***why do we do all of this?*** which is basically the same question the youngest member of a Jewish family asks at the beginning of the Seder, or Passover Meal; ***what is different?, why do we do all of this?***

The liturgy of the Easter Vigil, which I hope as many of you will make the effort to celebrate be it in your parishes or at the Cathedral itself, answers this question for us most poetically in the great EXULTET:

This is the night
that even now, throughout the world,
sets Christian believers apart from worldly vices
and from the gloom of sin,
leading them to grace
and joining them to his holy ones.

All the preparations of the Lenten Season, the careful attention to prayer, fasting and almsgiving, the spring cleaning not only of our houses but more importantly of our inner selves to get rid of the clutter and the noise which stops us hearing and responding to the voice of the Lord, all of us this done for a good purpose – to lead us to Grace and join us with the Holy Ones, the Saints, who experience fully and perfectly the love of the Blessed Trinity.

E Cossi Sia! May it be so...

A joyful and fruitful Lent, Holy Week and Eastertide...

Father Philip