

Easter 2016

Walk into any shopping mall
or amusement park,
and there is a good chance that you will find a large map.

And on that map will be a red star.
And beneath the red star
will be the words: "You are here"

"You are here," says the map.
"This is your starting point."

Wouldn't it be great,
if God would provide us with this kind of map?

A map that would say:

**"This is your life!
Here is how it got started.
Here is where it went wrong.**

**Here is what will happen next.
Here are the sign posts.
Here are the mile-markers.**

**And, most importantly, this is how things
are going to turn out
in the end."**

Wow! If only we can that kind of map!
A map with a red star and an arrow that would say:
"You are here.
And *here* is right where you need to be!"

Well, guess what?

God actually has given us plenty of these maps:

- in the writings of the Scriptures
- in the lives of the Saints
- and in the teaching of the Church!

God has given us reliable maps
and excellent directions...
if only we would but read and follow them.

Well, what about the particular map that God
provides for his pilgrim people
on the Feast of Easter?

Well, if today's gospel reading were
one of those giant maps in a public place,
the red star would be situated just outside the City of Jerusalem
and the arrow would point to an empty tomb.

And beneath the arrow, the words: "You are here."

Today, **this** is your *location*:
the empty tomb of Christ.

But is this your *destination*?
An empty tomb, after all, is empty.

Have you traveled the entire season of Lent
simply to end up here?

To answer this question,
put yourself in a situation of spiritual emptiness for just a moment.

--What do you do when you find yourself face-to-face with emptiness?

More to the point:

--How do you respond when you confront the gut-wrenching fear
that accompanies it?

If you want an answer,
ask a group of immigrants abandoned by a smuggler
in the Arizona desert.

---Where do people go
where there is nothing but emptiness all around them?

That's a good question.
And that's why it's necessary to remember that
the Red Star and the words, YOU ARE HERE,
But this location is only *momentary*.
It is **not** your destination

Believers know that an empty tomb is no place to be.
Christ has moved on...and so must we.

With the Gospel as our GPS,
with the great saints of our great Church as reliable guides,
we can turn away from the emptiness of the tomb
and set off to discover the fullness of life in the Risen Christ.

Today is the Feast of Easter
And the arrow on the map says,
"You are Here!"
You are here inside a church, a Catholic Church.

You are not inside an empty tomb.

Christ has moved on and has brought you to this church
the Church of (St. Ann, in Stinnett, Texas) St. John, in Borger, Texas.

You are here inside this church.

And what do you see inside this church?

One thing you see is children.

There are children here.

And where there are children. There is hope.

And hope destroys emptiness.

Today is Easter.

The arrow on the maps says: You are here.

You are here in church.

In this church we find, not only children, but young people.

Their backpacks packed heavy with dreams.

And they look to us to supply them with the wisdom and virtue
that will make those dreams of theirs come true.

What else do we find?

Well, look around you. Who do you see?

People.

People just like you!

Factory workers, teachers and nurses,
waitresses, electricians and truck drivers.

Retired folks. People whose lives give vivid witness to the power
of faith
and the resilience of truth.

Yes, people just like you.

People who know,
deep in their bones
and deep in their souls

that light overcomes darkness,
death gives way to life
and sacrifice and suffering are never in vain.

“You are here,” says the star on the map.

This is your community.

This is your home.

This is your parish.

We pray together.

We work together.

We struggle together.

We travel together.

Today, we stop for a moment, at the entrance of a tomb.

And, someday,

somewhere down the road,

we'll gather at the entrance of Heaven

and marvel at the Glory that awaits us inside.