

Some of you know that I took a little vacation after Christmas this year. I was invited by a family from another parish along with another priest to go to Hawaii. I know, I am very spoiled.

You can imagine what I did there. Everyday, yes, I played golf. But there was one other thing that I very much wanted to do while I was there. You see, we were on the island of Kauai, a small island, western and northern most edge of Hawaii. The next stop west of Kauai after miles and miles of ocean is Japan. Kauai is not very touristy. It is very local. No big cities.

On our last night there, a perfectly clear night, Fr. Jake and I hopped in the car and drove west – to the western-most part of the island – where no one lived. We pulled over onto the side of the road, shut the lights off – it was pitch black – got out of the car and looked up. Unbelievable – the sky was incredible, brilliant, flooded with stars. You could pick out the constellations perfectly. The Milky Way was awash with stars – more stars than your eyes could even take in.

I knew that at the end of the earth, on a remote island, in a place where no one lived, unobstructed and undiluted by human light, we would be able to see the sky, God's creation, in all its brilliance. I have to admit, now back here in Fort Wayne, when I walk back to the rectory at night and look up at the stars, I'm a little sad. With all the human lights flooding the night sky, you can only see a few stars, only the brightest ones. All the rest are obscured. You know they are there, but you can't see them.

This is a great analogy for us to understand more deeply the reality of our spiritual nature as humans and the meaning of the pivotal event of the resurrection of Jesus. Just like trying to see the stars in the light-polluted Fort Wayne sky, mired in original sin, humans could no longer see God. Because of this some humans in history, in fact mostly all humans, resorted to making up their own gods. And in more recent centuries many have chosen to believe that there is no God at all.

The Resurrection of Jesus pierces through the darkness and blindness of human sin. Jesus is raised, not back to this earthly life, as if He were just resuscitated, but He is raised body and soul together into a new life, a new kind of existence, one in which the material and spiritual are perfectly joined, the finite and the infinite are united. In the resurrected Jesus, we can once again look up and see the brilliance of the glory of God, unobscured by the mire of sin. When we are baptized through the power of the Holy Spirit, the brilliance of the glory of God, the presence of the Resurrected Savior, comes to reside in our souls.

But we all know that our own sinfulness and selfishness continues to obscure our vision of the brilliance of God and so the resurrected Lord Jesus comes to us continually to dispel the pollution of our sinfulness so that we can see His brilliance more clearly. In the Sacraments, especially confession, many experienced this this Lent.

He comes in the Holy Eucharist, truly Jesus present to us, but we must remember that the Eucharist is the Resurrected Jesus! Every time we receive, He comes to clear our obscured

vision so that we might “see” God’s brilliance more clearly. And the Resurrected Lord Jesus continues to work throughout our lives to prepare us for eternal life, to prepare us for the day when we will be resurrected like Him, body and soul where we will be perfectly united to God, seeing Him face to face in heaven, with nothing whatsoever obscuring our view.

If you go outside tonight and look up at the sky, I’m afraid that you won’t see many stars in the light-polluted Fort Wayne sky. But if you look into your hearts – hearts renewed by the discipline and penance of Lent and filled anew with the grace of God – you will see with clearer vision the brilliance of God. And as you receive the resurrected Jesus in Holy Communion, week-by-week, even day-by-day, His Holy Presence in you continues to burn off the obscuring residue of sin, making you ready for eternal life where you will see God unobscured, perfectly, face to face.

**Given by Father Mark Gurtner at Our Lady of Good Hope Catholic Church on
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