



DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Easter 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Happy Easter to you and your families in this Jubilee Year of Hope!

Our celebration of Easter rekindles our hope each year.

The Tomb is empty! Jesus is Risen!

A wealthy man and a member of the Sanhedrin, St. Joseph of Arimathea is one of those Gospel characters with a very brief but very important role.

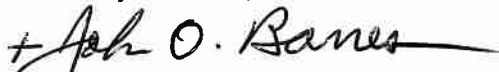
In John 19:38-42, we see that after Jesus' Crucifixion, Joseph of Arimathea asks Pilate for permission to take away Our Lord's Body. This was a bold and courageous act of faith from a man "seeking the Kingdom of God." (Mark 15:43)

Joseph and Nicodemus together place our Lord's Body reverently in linen cloths prepared with myrrh, aloes and spices: "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden a new tomb where no one had ever been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, as the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there."

In his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, Fr. Simeon Leiva-Merikakis gives tribute to Joseph of Arimathea. He writes: "And how can we fail to do homage to Joseph of Arimathea? In performing a very humane corporal work of mercy by seeking out and burying the corpse of his beloved Teacher, Joseph becomes for all time a living icon of the eternal Father himself, stooping with compassion to enfold within his throbbing breast the mangled body of his beloved, Son, whom he himself handed over to sinners out of love for mankind. At long last, the Son of God on earth has fallen into the hands, not of a sinner, but of a just and compassionate man! Joseph of Arimathea enacts the justice and love of God himself."¹

As we celebrate Easter Sunday, the Easter Octave, Divine Mercy Sunday and the Easter Season, let us remember and ask the intercession of the great Joseph of Arimathea who prepared the Tomb of Christ and the Body of Christ with such sensitive care and compassion, such faith, courage and reverence. The Tomb is Empty! He is Risen!

Sincerely in Christ,


Most Reverend John O. Barres
Bishop of Rockville Centre

¹ Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, 564. *Fire of Mercy, Heart of the Word: Meditations on the Gospel According to St. Matthew.*