

**Easter Sunday**  
**Cycle A**  
**April 24, 2011**  
**Saint Margaret Parish, Bel Air**

*Chocolat*

A few years ago, I saw the movie *Chocolat* – and that, of course, is the French word for chocolate.

This movie – *Chocolat* – was excellent and it received a nomination for an Academy Award. I see it as a great Easter story and I say this not just because it conjures up images of chocolate rabbits and Easter eggs.

The story takes place in a small, rural French village in 1959. Life in this little French village is very traditional, very rigid, very structured, and very judgmental.

But then, into the village comes a young woman named Vianne and her little daughter. Vianne opens a chocolaterie – a chocolate shop.

With her own recipes, she makes and sells anything made with chocolate – milk chocolate, bittersweet chocolate, chocolates filled with nuts and jellies and crèmes, steaming cups of hot chocolate, chocolate cake, chocolate éclairs, everything. You can gain a couple pounds just watching the movie!

The mayor of this French town is very opposed to the chocolate shop and tries to keep the villagers from patronizing it. He sees it as a place of sinful indulgence.

And, of course, because Vianne has opened the chocolate shop during Lent, the mayor judges it to be the work of the devil. Well, despite all of the mayor's efforts to close the shop and make it fail, little by little Vianne succeeds.

Her shop becomes a place of acceptance, love and care. Little by little the entire village is changed and on Easter Sunday, even the young parish priest throws away his traditional homily and just speaks from the heart about what the risen Christ means to him.

He tells the villagers and us, the audience not to measure goodness by what we can condemn and reject and exclude. Instead, he calls us to measure goodness by what we can create and love and embrace.

**A Resurrection Story**

As I said, I see *Chocolat* as an Easter story, a resurrection story.

It tells how people of this French village come to fuller life or simply come to life after being virtually dead. On the surface, this happens because of chocolate, but in truth the transformation happens because of the virtues that Vianne has introduced.

*Chocolat* and Easter tell us that respect for persons is much more life-giving than rejection or judgment. They tell us that including others can accomplish much more than excluding them.

*Chocolat* and the resurrection tell us that love can be much stronger than prejudice or disdain. And above all else, they tell us that light will win out over darkness and that life will in the long run win out over death.

In the movie, this is what happens to the small French village. Easter and the risen Christ tell us that the same thing can happen for all of us.

### How?

The question is: How?

How can this happen for us? In one word, the answer is: Faith.

Faith, or trust in the risen Jesus is how all these forces of light and life can triumph over the forces of darkness and death. We are invited to trust as the first disciples do in today's gospel – to trust that Jesus is risen.

We are invited to risk, to take the gamble that this is true and to live our life as if it were. If we do that, we will discover that the way of Jesus leads us to an experience of fuller life even on this earth.

In fact, we will discover that the way of the risen Jesus gives us such a fullness of life that resurrection after physical death just makes sense. It feels right.

Our daring to trust or believe and to live by that will simply confirm the hope that Easter brings to all of us. So, Happy Easter and please enjoy your chocolates!