

Dear People of God,

Two thousand plus years have passed since the events of the first Easter. To this day what happened remains a mystery! Some want to believe that we were all tricked into thinking that Jesus was raised from the dead. Others are so uncertain that they cannot or choose not to believe that it happened. Others agree strongly that because they cannot know for sure, they cannot believe. But faith is not certainty. So today, we who call ourselves Christians put our faith in Jesus who was raised from the dead.

We have no proof of this Easter Resurrection beyond the faith of all who have gone before us, from Mary of Magdala to Peter and to Paul. We join our act of faith to theirs. We believe as they believed and in doing so, we become an Easter people. The Easter message is pertinent to our present life. Easter injects a word of hope, a word of light. It is not a word that neither covers up the ugly side of life nor denies it. It is a word that insists a gracious God stands by us in our helplessness, our impotence, our hostility; our many kinds of death. Even if the powers of darkness seem to be winning, as they did in the case of Jesus, our gracious God says death is not the final word. He is too much of a God of life to let us be swallowed up by the powers of darkness.

Today, Christians around the world celebrate that life has meaning. Jesus is the God of real people, who live real lives, and have real joys and real sorrows. Easter allows us to face the Good News and the bad news of our life. God is there through it all, just as God was with Christ through it all. Today's feast invites us to move from fear to freedom, from the past to the present, from winter to spring, from sadness to Alleluia, from death to life. Jesus invites you and me to come out of our own tombs into the light of His life. The news of Jesus rising is meant to send us away from those tombs, from our dead-end streets, and to go on the road to our respective Galilees.

In today's gospel it's easy to imagine young John running enthusiastically to Jesus' tomb, beating out the old guy Peter, and being the first to believe that Christ was risen. But when wise and world-weary Peter comes to accept the Good News, you know we must really be on to something great. Two-thousand years later and billions of hearts served and fed, Christianity is still worth the risk no matter what your tastes. A Cistercian abbot Gueric of Igny wrote... As the new sun rises from below, the grace of the Resurrection already casts its radiance over the whole world, a radiance reflected in the eyes of those who have watched for him since daybreak, a dawn that ushers in the day of eternity.

So, to all of you, a special welcome this Easter: welcome to our fellowship of faith. Whether faith in the Risen One comes easy to you, or whether you find it difficult to believe, welcome to God's word of light and life over our world of darkness and death. May peace and joy be ours here. May the light and new life of Jesus, the Lord who-is-Risen, come over us! In truth, the empty tomb confronts us with a message of joy. The message is clear: God waits for each one of us to come home to Him. He invites us in freedom and that is the joy of this day.

Easter joy one and all,

Fr. William

