

Church buildings around the world are dark and empty today; perhaps this is symbolic of the empty tomb discovered by Mary Magdalene in the early morning while it was still dark. Although this year, the darkness of confusion and isolation are prevalent in our world, the Church (with a capital C) is very much alive in the Light of the Resurrection! Today is the greatest day of celebration for Christian believers. Without flowers, bells, lights, or music in our church buildings, this day is not empty, because voices are proclaiming boldly from rooftops, balconies, front porches, and from this chapel, “Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!

Today is the day we celebrate the fulfillment of God’s promise of a new covenant. Today, Jesus Christ bursts forth, opening the gates to eternal life for us all. By doing so, we are joined with him in eternal glory. We heard last night in the Easter Proclamation that this is “when things of heaven are wed to those of earth, and divine to the human.” It is through this union that we are given the grace to live anew. St. Paul tells the Corinthians and us to “clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a fresh batch of dough.” Our new way of life gives witness to our belief in the Risen Christ. Just as we heard Peter recount the story of Jesus and share of how the early disciples were given the commission to tell the Good News of our salvation, we are now commissioned to do the same. Through our lives, we must show that we are the leaven needed for the world today. This is how we continue to tell the story. Jesus’ story is our story.

We heard last night in the Gospel of Matthew that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, after learning that Jesus was not in the tomb went away quickly, *fearful yet overjoyed*, and that “Jesus met them on their way and greeted them.” I have spent time praying with and pondering what message this may have for us. Jesus met the women in the middle space where they were *fearful yet overjoyed*. Jesus met them in their humanness, in their confusion and lack of understanding, but did not leave them there. With his greeting, Jesus gave them new vision and a deeper understanding of the hope for what was yet to come. With his greeting, they saw and believed.

Jesus does this same thing for us. Jesus meets us on our way...somewhere in the middle of our humanness, in the midst of our doubt and confusion, but He does not leave us there. If we read a bit further in today's Gospel of John, Jesus says, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." This establishes us as heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ with the promise of eternal life. Our very presence here today shows that we have the desire to deepen this relationship with God. It is this relationship, especially during this current time of sorrow and uncertainty, that enflames our hope for tomorrow and enables us to proclaim, "*Amen. Alleluia. I do believe!*"

During this Lent, we have each sought to deepen our relationship with God. It has been through our prayer and good works that we have come to recognize God's love and mercy, and of God's promise of redemption. Today, that promise comes to fulfillment through Christ's resurrection. Today, like Mary Magdalene and the disciple whom Jesus loved, we see Jesus in His glory and we believe.

As disciples of the Risen Christ, may we reflect the Light of the Resurrection in our world today leading others to see and believe. And when others tell the story of Jesus, how might they give testimony to how our story is a part of Jesus' story? From my perspective, a headline report could read something like this:

*Sacred Heart Monastery, 2020. Thirty-four Benedictine women radiate the Light of Christ through their prayers and good works dispelling the darkness of their times. See their joy and hear their voices as they proclaim, "Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!"*

Today, and in the days to come, let us continue to tell the stories of how Christ is alive and lives within us. Alleluia!