



He Speaks: Finding Christ in the Days of Lent

The Resurrection of the Lord

Readings: Acts 10:34a, 37-43, Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23, Colossians 3:1-4 Or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8, John 20:1-9 or Matthew 28:1-10

"Do not be afraid."

In Matthew's Gospel for Easter Sunday, there are quite a few *actually frightening* things that happen when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to Jesus' tomb—first, an earthquake. Then, an angel descends from heaven. Then, this heavenly being just rolls away the stone... and sits on it. His appearance alone is enough to terrify a group of tough-guy guards, who were too scared to move.

Then, he told the women, "Do not be afraid."

Don't be afraid. This doesn't usually work. In fact, in psychological circles, it is often said that it backfires. But, this is an angel sent with a message, "I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said." Now he had their attention.

Fear was replaced by a shaky, hesitant joy. That "is it too good to be true" feeling we have all had. But then, as they walked away, there he was. Jesus himself. We can only imagine their stunned disbelief, shock, hope, and awe at seeing him.

And he said, "Do not be afraid."

And like the angel, once they really saw him, and were paying attention. He went on. "Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

Today's Gospel reading leaves it right there. They have seen him. They have the news, they have his instructions. It's extraordinary, but it's all true.

We've spent the last six weeks of Lent learning about who Jesus is, what He came for, and how to begin or deepen our relationship with Him. He has encouraged us to dig deeply, live authentically. He taught us the value of his Word in times of struggle and temptation. He has met us at the well where we learned we could be our true selves with him and experience his love. He taught us that our eyes only really open to the possibility of life with him when we really see him. And he spoke to us in the silence of his Passion, when his love for us was proven, irrevocably. This is who we saw die for our sake—and who we now see alive, also for our sake, to show us the way forward.

Everything Jesus taught us through Lent has been leading to this moment—not only to the triumph of the Resurrection, but to our encounter with the Risen Lord.

Easter is indeed the story of Christ's victory over death—the act that opens the way to our salvation.

But it is also the moment when the Risen Jesus turns toward those who loved him and speaks the words that echo through every age:

“Do not be afraid.”

Because he lives, we can walk without fear.

Because he lives, we are free to follow him into new life.

Because he lives, everything has changed.

He goes before us.

He calls us.

And he invites us now to live in the light of his Resurrection.

Listening with the Church — Easter

Regina Caeli – Queen of Heaven*

V. Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia.

R. For He whom you did merit to bear, alleluia.

V. Has risen, as he said, alleluia.

R. Pray for us to God, alleluia.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.

R. For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.

Let us pray. O God, who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, grant we beseech Thee, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Said in place of the Angelus during Eastertide.

Blessing of Easter Eggs

We beseech Thee, O Lord, to bestow Thy benign blessing upon these eggs, to make them a wholesome food for Thy faithful, who gratefully partake of them in honor of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ.