



April 17, 2022

Easter Sunday

the Resurrection of the Lord

*Then the other disciple also went in, the one who arrived at the tomb first,
and he saw and believed. John 20:8*



Dear Friends;

Christ's resurrection was not a return to life as we know it. It was an entrance into heaven but that doesn't mean it was life in some sort of "spirit world." The resurrection is the beginning of a new world, a human bodily life in the Kingdom. The God who took flesh in the human person Jesus, now in the resurrection continues to take flesh in us and all creation.

In the New Testament there is no single, unified picture of resurrection. It is a reality that lies beyond a simple description. Probably the earliest descriptions of the resurrection are the stories of the empty tomb. These stories call us to make a response. Was the Body of the Lord stolen or did something else happen?

In today's passage from John, Mary Magdalene represents the community grieving over the death of Jesus and their need for consolation. Her report that someone stole the body, reflects the accusation by enemies of the Jesus movement. They claimed the body was stolen to prove that he was raised from the dead. Peter and the beloved disciple go to the tomb. Peter remains mystified while the other disciple "*saw and believed.*"

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not something that just took place two thousand years ago. It is a reality that continues to unfold in our midst today. So where are we to look for the resurrected Christ. We who are baptized into Christ are called the risen body of Christ. We find him when we are assembled in faith. We hear the Risen One speak to us in Scripture and we know him in our sharing in the Eucharistic meal.

Each Spring when my garden comes back to life with an abundance of flowers, the resurrection can be seen in the renewal of nature. The Risen Christ could be seen in a couple I was preparing for marriage. The groom lovingly teased his fiancé, a teacher, who couldn't stop itching. There was a reported outbreak of lice in the school. He would look at her, smile and scratch his hair. She laughed and said "stop." Joy is sign of God's presence.

Recently, I was called to anoint a man who was dying in the hospital. He was developmentally disabled and in his sixties. His brothers and their wives were there. He appeared to be semi-conscious, so I greeted him. "*Michael, I'm Fr Ron and I've come to say some prayers with you.*" He beamed at me and gave me a beautiful, largely toothless smile. One of the women said "*Oh, he loves church, and this is the most responsive he has been since he got here!*" As I prayed his brothers held his hands. It was so beautiful that I got choked up. I was sure I saw in Michael's smile the face of Christ.

The Christ who flung open the doors of the tomb invites us to fling open the doors of our hearts. We see resurrection as we work for the renewal of the earth. We see the Risen One in the face of those we love. We see him in the needs of poor and disadvantaged. The Risen Christ is with us as we stand for human dignity and work to overcome the injustices of racism, sexism, nationalism, violence, and war.

Jesus walked through life and death with love, then becomes an infinite sharing in the life of God. Resurrection teaches us that nothing dies forever, and all that has died in love will be reborn in an even larger love. We can't prove the resurrection we can only perceive it through love.

Christ is Risen!

Fr Ron

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