

April 16, 2017
The Resurrection of the Lord - Easter Sunday
Acts 10:34-43 Colossians 3:1-4 John 20:1-9

There was no Tweet on the first Easter morning announcing the resurrection. Indeed, the FIRST moments of Easter were not dramatic encounters with Jesus but rather a confusing mystery surrounding an EMPTY TOMB. Mary of Magdala saw that the stone sealing the tomb had been removed and Peter and John found burial cloths but no body? Could it have been grave robbers? Perhaps they were confused and went to the wrong grave? As normal human beings, Peter and John (along with the other disciples as they became aware of the news) could not fathom what had occurred. These were not theorists schooled in fancy concepts or terminology; these were fishermen, hard workingmen who knew what they had witnessed on Friday at Calvary. They no doubt double and triple checked that they were in the right place...and could not immediately understand what had occurred...but they were starting to connect the dots pertaining to Jesus' previous hints at *'rising from the dead.'* As this weekend's Gospel of John says...even though *'they did not YET understand the Scripture that he (Jesus) had to rise from the dead'*, the disciple John *'saw and believed.'* Exactly what he believed we do not know...but it was the SEED of a realization that something overwhelming had occurred.

Through assorted brunches, EASTER chocolates, peeps, bonnets and baskets our commercial culture will make a pretty penny off of the Empty Tomb. Around the world, church choirs and congregations will lift their voices in the EASTER equivalent of Christmas carols, all announcing that 'Jesus Christ is Risen Today.' It is a grand day and will be well celebrated... and tomorrow our culture will move on to anticipating Mother's Day, graduations and Summer. Not so for us as people of faith...today is just the beginning of a lengthy reflection upon what the empty tomb means.

It is apt that our EASTER Gospels all begin EARLY in the morning...the start of the day, the rising of the sun...the GROWING illumination by which to see everything more clearly. EASTER is just the beginning, the seed of perception that things are changing...the first glimmer of light/understanding...but EASTER is not the fullness of what is to come...that needs to be awaited.

Anxious for quick answers and clear resolution to things that unsettle or throw our lives into tumult, we want EASTER to be HUGE and DECISIVE. We want the angel choir from Christmas, shepherds being told the good news and wise men following their star. So early in the morning that it is still dark, the EASTER story HINTS at something huge and decisive but in the most humble of ways...the tomb is empty.

EASTER is a beginning...a start...a first breath...an inkling that we will survive or pass through whatever afflicts us. EASTER is the dawning awareness that answers and fresh possibilities are 'out there' but still need to be sought. EASTER is the slight 'lightening' of the sky as morning draws near after a dark night of the soul. EASTER is the planting of a tomato seed in anticipation of a Fourth of July picnic. EASTER is the setting of the date for a surgery in hope of a full recovery in time for the family reunion. EASTER is the signing of documents that open a life to fresh possibilities. EASTER is the taking of a deep breath and walking forward into a life still to be lived.

Celebrated here this morning with ritual, song and Sacrament, the real empty tomb of EASTER occurs 'OUT THERE' where you and I live our lives. Thousands, millions and billions of EASTERs are occurring each day as people leave whatever tomb, gloom or darkness restrained them. EASTER is God's faithful commitment to the message of the Christmas angels: 'His name is Emmanuel, God is With Us.' EASTER is God being with us, no matter the crucifixions, no matter the humiliations, no matter the defeats, setbacks, disillusionments, betrayals, falls and stumbles.

**Today the tomb is empty. THIS is EASTER: what appears to be dead and over...is not.
There is life to be lived; it is time to leave our tombs. May today be an EASTER seed for you.**

Thank you for joining with our Santa Clara community as we embrace the fresh seed of EASTER. My great appreciation is extended to all who have helped our Holy Week Masses and events be filled with color, love and faith: our Music Ministry, Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Hospitality Teams, the Faith Formation Teams that have prepared our children, families, youth and adults to embrace the mysteries celebrated within our rituals; the Good Friday Prayer Breakfast which only occurs through the dedication of those who bring it to life as does the art and environment surrounding us. For all who have labored, thank you for your love...and for you who have participated within our Easter Masses....this was all done FOR YOU....because we love you! Happy Easter. FKB