

Homily. Easter Vigil/Easter Sunday. 8/9 April 2023.

It doesn't matter much which Easter story we hear for they all agree on these essentials; That Mary of Magdala and perhaps another one or two other women were the first to rise from their beds just as that new Sunday dawn was breaking and make their way to the tomb of Jesus. Finding it empty they were rightly confused, wondering if it had been robbed or vandalised. Then, be it by an Angel or by some other means, they heard a message, the good-news; That Jesus has risen from the dead darkness of the tomb just as he had promised and that they were to go and tell the other disciples what had happened, preparing them to meet him soon.

In every telling the emotions of these women, the first apostles, see-saws between shock and anxiety, awe and outright joy. This, too, is fitting and easily understood by us. Jesus, their teacher and leader in whom they had placed their faith and even their lives, had been captured, unjustly condemned and executed publicly in a most painful, shameful and horrific fashion. They'd seen all of this with their own eyes. They'd watched as his battered, broken and lifeless corpse was taken down from the Cross and sealed away from the light of the living by a big stone. How, then, could he be alive? How could they be seeing him now? How could they be hearing him tell them that he was soon going to meet with the others?

If such a thing were ever to happen to us we'd ask similar questions, wondering if our eyes and ears were tricking us, even entertaining the thought that we were going mad. Beneath all of this would be an until now secret hope; That somehow by God's power anything and everything was possible; That even the absolute finality of death had been defeated,

shown up as a lie and like a safe box finally be cracked open. This was how it was for Mary Magdalen and her friends and soon for others, too.

What you and I see and hear tonight/today as witnesses to the rising of the Lord is the loving fidelity of God for Jesus and for his friends. We take notice of the action of God's powerful love lifting us up, healing us and all who find their hope and meaning in Christ's resurrection. This is God's greatest possible sign to us of how highly we're valued; That our humble, frail, sinful and death-directed humanity is being saved, raised, restored and is even now being re-created anew by God's sacrifice for us.

How, then, can we not rejoice and be glad in the free gift of life that we're already living, to be fulfilled in our own rising? How can we not love and respect each other as earthen vessels holding the priceless treasure of God dwelling within us? For, if God loves and values humanity so very much as Jesus resurrection proves, then what we've got to do from now on is grow hearts grateful to God, and like Jesus himself, live lovingly, generously and justly in all of our ways, day by day becoming evermore God's resurrection people giving our witness to the Lord in this time and place. Henceforth, this is how you and I sing out our Alleluia's in praise of God's might love for all.