



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

April 2019

A Message for Easter

In the coming days, the Church will celebrate the great wonder of Easter, the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

When we go to Easter Sunday Mass, to celebrate this wondrous event that changed all of history, we're going to hear a very familiar Gospel passage. Even though it is familiar, many of us – I know I certainly do – find it always very moving, a cause for some profound reflection that leads invariably to a deep joy.

We hear about Mary Magdalene. After Jesus dies, she goes to the tomb and finds that the stone has been rolled back and the tomb is empty. That leaves her feeling sad and bereft. She's weeping. She's standing there, and she's searching. The body of the Lord is not there; she's wondering what's going on, and it's leading in her heart to deep sorrow, expressed in profuse tears. I find those tears a very eloquent expression of what's happening in the hearts and minds of a lot of people even today.

I say that in light of my experiences meeting many, many parishioners, whether it's in the context of a pastoral visit or the various listening sessions I've been holding. I like to check in and find out how people are doing, and I'm hearing many expressions of a longing, a wondering, and indeed of a sadness, and sometimes anxiety and worry, inhabiting the hearts of many people.

For example, some are seeking truth: What is true? What's right? Many falsehoods and deceits seem to be invading our culture. Our young in particular tell me they are searching for meaning: What's life all about? Why am I here? Where do I find my true identity? Where's it all going? Many are looking for hope in the midst of despair, looking for consolation in the midst of deep pain.

Like Mary Magdalene, a lot of us find ourselves searching, wondering, and indeed sorrowful. So we need the message of Easter, because Easter brings to us what it brought to Mary Magdalene: the truth that Jesus is the answer to all of this longing, this questioning; the truth that our search can end now, because the answer has come looking for us, and wants to encounter us. That answer is a person. It's Jesus, who is risen and alive, who remains with his people.

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When Mary Magdalene encountered the Risen Lord and realized who he was, all those tears were transformed into joy, and she ran away to proclaim the good news. That's what happens with us when we meet the Lord. We realize the search has ended, we've found the one for whom we have been longing, the one we have been seeking. He's with us. We know we need never be afraid, because in Him we see meaning, truth, hope, life itself. And that encounter with Our Lord brings with it a peace, a joy, a consolation that no circumstance, however difficult, could ever take away.

My prayer is that this be for you an occasion, as it was for Mary Magdalene, of encountering the Risen Christ and finding in him the answer to your deepest search, the answer to everything for which you are longing. Open your heart to Him, so that in Him, you will find that peace and joy for which every human heart longs.

A happy and blessed Easter to each and every one of you.

Yours sincerely in Christ,



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