

HOMILY EASTER VIGIL – YEAR A (Homily 02)
“Come and See; Go and Tell”
(Romans 6:3-11; Mt 28:1-10)

The Gospel is a striking description of the resurrection of Jesus that holds within it meaningful nuances for our spiritual life. First is the need that we have to grieve and mourn our losses. That is what the women went to the cemetery to do – to look at the grave, to mourn and grieve. What else could they do now that Jesus had been killed? Grieving and mourning our losses is a sometimes neglected step in our own healing. As Joyce Rupp put it in one of her books, “We can’t say hello until we have said goodbye.”

However, the women discover an empty tomb, the stone rolled away and an angel sitting on the stone. That stone was there to keep people out, not to keep the dead person in. This is an invitation to us to enter our own tombs, to befriend our shadow, to let God’s spirit into the hidden recesses of our own hearts and lives, to face, name and deal with our own painful emotions and defects of character.

The angel, full of light and dressed in scintillating white, sitting on the stone, is a delightful touch of irony on the part of the evangelist. That stone represents all that blocks us in life, all the forces of evil and darkness that prevent us from living life to the full. God’s power through the resurrection of Jesus has proved triumphant over evil, sin, suffering and illness. The angel sitting on that stone is like an exclamation point, deriving that lesson home. We no longer have anything to fear. God’s unconditional love is more powerful than any manifestation of evil in our lives. We have been set free through the resurrection of Jesus.

The light and whiteness of the angel is also a reminder that we should not be surprised at this event. After all, that was the meaning of the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain, where Moses and Elijah appeared to Jesus and were talking with him about “his hour,” about precisely this moment and this event, his passion, death and resurrection in Jerusalem. This was all part of God’s plan to save the world. The apostles had been prepared for this, but of course, in their slowness to catch on and believe, it is the women who got it first.

The second reading now kicks in and informs us of the meaning of this groundbreaking, earth shattering event. Through our faith in Jesus and baptism, we share in his resurrection. We, who are baptized into Christ’s death, rise with him to newness of life in the likeness of his resurrection.

What Moses and Elijah experienced on that mountain, along with Peter and James and John, is now our present reality, not just for a glorious passing moment, but for now and forever and for always. We have been given the priceless gift of being able to walk, by faith and love, in the likeness of Jesus' resurrection, a new way of life, full of peace, hope, love and joy, no matter what is going on around us. This is the meaning of the resurrection. This is our faith. All we have to do now is live it.

The end result of this momentous in-breaking of heaven on earth is our mission. That mission is clear. We hear the words, *Come and see; Go and tell*. That is the dynamics of the Church's mission. We are first of all invited to come and see, to believe in, to experience the power of the resurrection. That means that we are to grieve, mourn and accept our losses through the power of the Spirit of the Risen Lord. We are also to let go of any resentments and forgive anyone who has hurt us through the power of that same Spirit. That is our resurrection. Then, having experienced the power of the resurrection in our own lives, we are sent on mission, to go and tell the whole world, what has happened to us, what has happened to all humanity, and to invite all others to share in this good news.

What could be more exalted than that? We are apostles of the resurrection, called to believe, to experience, to live the resurrection of Jesus in our own lives, and to invite the rest of the world to join us in walking in newness of life, and in the likeness of the resurrection of Jesus.

Jeremy was born with a twisted body, a slow mind, and a chronic illness that had been slowly killing him all his young life. Still, his parents had tried to give him as normal a life as possible and had sent him to a regular elementary school. Shortly before Easter, their teacher told his class about the new life of Easter and gave them each a large plastic egg with the assignment to bring them back the next day with something within them that showed new life. All nineteen students returned with symbols of new life in their eggs, except Jeremy whose egg was empty. When asked why his egg was empty, Jeremy replied it was because Jesus' tomb was empty. The teacher asked if he knew why the tomb was empty, and Jeremy replied enthusiastically, "Oh yes, Jesus was killed and put in there. Then his Father raised him up!" Three months later Jeremy died. Those who paid their respects at the funeral were surprised to see 19 eggs on top of his casket all of them empty. They had seen Jeremy's faith, and now they were symbolically sharing it with all.

Sometimes children can have a deeper insight into reality than adults. The Eucharist that we celebrate now is itself a celebration of the new life of Easter

through Word and Sacrament for all, children and adults, Good News that we are called to first experience, then share.

May our celebration today empower us to walk through the dark areas of our lives to find forgiveness, healing and the new life of Easter. We are invited to come and see, and then to go and tell.

