

Easter Sunday B2024

When Jesus was arrested and put to death, almost all his disciples run away. Even Peter, who was courageous and followed the situation at distance, ended up by denying him. All were dispersed like sheep without shepherd, fearful and desperate.

When that morning on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome went to the tomb, their intention was not to go and greet Jesus because he was risen. No; they were going to anoint the body of the dead Jesus, according to the customs of the Jewish tradition. It was at that moment they were surprised.

To their great astonishment, the tomb was empty; our Lord was not there; he was risen. The concern they had about the removal of the stone from the entrance of the tomb became useless because it had been rolled back. The angel they saw reassured them: "Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified, you are seeking has been raised; he is not here".

That marvelous news of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus is what we celebrate today. Beyond the history of what happened in those circumstances of time, place and epoch under Pontius Pilate, we celebrate, here and now, the mystery of the power of God who gives life anew. We celebrate what the risen Lord accomplishes in our midst and among us as a community of those who believe in him, a community called to conversion, gathered in faith, and gifted with the Holy Spirit of holiness. We celebrate God's taking possession of our hearts in his son Jesus at their deepest core by re-creating us as a community rich in compassion, steadfast in hope, and fearless in the search for justice and peace.

Today we celebrate the founding event that gives meaning and sense to our faith: "If Christ is not risen from the dead, our faith is in vain and vain is also our hope in the resurrection of the dead", St Paul writes to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15: 17). Easter means that life is bigger than death and God is bigger than human beings. Easter reminds us that nothing is impossible to God and never will the gates of death prevail against him. With the resurrection of our Lord, we are assured that the outcome of our life will be different; whatever might be the problems we are dealing with now.

The resurrection of our Lord compels us to have another look on the reality of death as human phenomenon. For sure, we cannot deny the sadness of the death of our beloved ones, the anxiety it causes us and the void it leaves around us. However, whatever might be its burden on us and the sorrow it brings, death is not an absolute reality; we die with the hope of something bigger than it. Death is just the transformation of our present conditions of life. It cannot prevent God's life to flourish in us. Like Christ, when we die, God gives us life anew.

The resurrection of our Lord teaches us that the grave is no more a place where death is closed up behind a rolled stone. The stone of death has been removed forever from the tomb. When we celebrate Christ's resurrection, we anticipate our victory over death.

The readings of this day give us a testimony from eyes' witnesses of those who were with our Lord from his humble beginning in Galilee until his death on the cross and his resurrection. Saint Peter draws a picture of Jesus who was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power, went about in doing good throughout the whole country, healing the sick, and with whom the God was present.

Saint Peter attests equally his death as someone who was present when it happened. He affirms also the reality of his resurrection as someone who really saw the empty tomb. He Confirms that God raised him on the third day and granted him to be visible, not to all, but to a few witnesses of those who ate and drank with him.

Today that witness has come to us. We prolong it by claiming that Jesus Christ is risen. He is alive, for God could not let his loved one stay indefinitely in the tomb. He commissioned us to preach in his name and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead.

Today St Paul calls us to celebrate the Paschal feast, not with the old yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. That is also the invitation the Risen Christ addresses to each one of us. Let us respond to him with faith and love. Let us celebrate Easter with joy. Peace to all of you and your families as you gather with us this morning for the celebration of the resurrection of our Lord. Viva Cristo!

Acts 10: 34a, 37-43; 1 Corinthians 5: 6b-8; Mark 16: 1-7



Homily Date: March 31, 2024
© 2024 – Fr Felicien I. Mbala, PhD, STD
Contact: www.mbala.org
Document Name: 20240331homily.pdf