

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ, Jesus.

He has gone beyond nature. In nature when a thing goes up in the sky, it has to come down. That's the nature of gravity. And again here, the nature of human life is that a person who is born is supposed to die. There is no resurrection. There is no rebirth again. But here Jesus went beyond the natural phenomena and rose again, leaving the empty tomb for us to know that he is risen. Yes, my dear sisters and brothers, today we have every reason to celebrate, seeing the empty tomb, that he is no longer in the empty tomb. An angel appeared to the women and said, "Why are you looking for Jesus of Nazareth among the dead? He is not here. He is alive." Today we have the privilege to say that we are all Christians. We are all children of God.

There are three very important things in today's celebration; the feast of Easter. One is: Easter is basic to our Christian faith. If Easter was not there, then we would not be here today.

St. Paul tells us, "If he has not risen, then there is no meaning in our preaching and there is no meaning in your faith. Everything is in vain." So for our faith, the resurrection is the basic foundation - that we believe in God and that he is risen. He is alive. The second: there is a sure guarantee for us that we will also rise again. Before Good Friday, Jesus said, "When I am lifted up, I will draw all men to myself." Indeed, he has taken upon himself all of our infirmities, all our sins and failures. But again, he has also promised to Martha, when Martha appealed to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." And Jesus tells her, "Do you believe that your brother will rise?" "Yes, Lord, on the last day." Then Jesus tells, "I am the resurrection, I am the life - anyone who believes in me will not die. And anyone who believes and dies will live forever." And that is a sure guarantee for us that even if we die we will rise again with Christ on the day of resurrection.

And the third: There is a sure hope that we have a new life in the very person of Christ. A person who has broken the sting of death will never die again. And he is living among us. He is with us today and it's a hope that we carry with us on this feast today of Easter - that Jesus Christ who was buried, dead and now is risen, no more to die again, but rather is with us in life, giving us a new life. What does the feast of Easter mean? Easter means it is a new flowering, a new life. And today we have flowers, with freshness and a new life. As we began our Lenten observances, we saw all dried branches. I said that we need to give life to the branches, these dried branches. But now, we feel symbolically, those dried branches have a new life in the very person of Christ himself giving us also a share in his newness. And that is the hope.

Yes, my dear sisters and brothers, today we celebrate that great event of Jesus' resurrection, and we commemorate the newness of our own life. When we celebrate this feast, what should we take home with us today? Perhaps, we lie buried in our own sinfulness. We are caught in our own egos, pride, our own selfishness. But now on this

feast we rise again. We rise from this folly of life, from this sinfulness, from this pride and selfishness. When we rise into new life, we become a new person, then Easter becomes a meaningful celebration for us. That is the true celebration of Easter itself. Definitely, we may rejoice. We have walked through 40 days observing all the fasting, prayer and penance. But now the pinnacle arrives with Easter. If Easter does not have an impact in our life, then it remains only a liturgical celebration. Our own Christian faith requires that we also need to rise from our own sinfulness.

Today, my dear Sisters and Brothers, as Jesus appeared to the women he told them to not be afraid - to "tell my brothers to go to Galilee, I will be there." It's because the disciples began their life in Galilee. The disciples thought after the death of Jesus, everything is shattered, everything is gone; but now we heard in the first reading how Peter comes up and tells them "We are the witnesses. We have seen the risen Jesus and we only speak that risen Jesus in our lives. And we are called to be the witnesses." Jesus calls them to go to Galilee, "Come on. I will make you the fishers of men." And now, he wants to strengthen them, to give a new strength, a new life, so that they can go and be witnesses. The same call is given to each one of us. Let us go to Galilee, where we have a new life. Let us go to our own baptismal promises and now that new life should begin for our own life as witnesses telling that we have seen the Lord. We have the risen Jesus with us today in life. And that is the message, that we have new life in each one of us in the person of Christ. Let us pray that God may give us to be the witnesses and to enjoy this new life in every day of our own lives. May God bless each one of us. Amen