

## *Easter Sunday 2021*

On that 1<sup>st</sup> Easter morning, the Angel at the empty tomb tells Mary Magdalene, “Do not be amazed.” How can she not be amazed? How can the world not be amazed? My friends, up to this moment in time, we thought our lives followed the predictable pattern of the universe, we are born, we live and we die. And then, something amazing happened beyond just an angel appearing to Mary Magdalene. That alone was amazing. The tomb was empty, you see. Death has died. There is nothing more amazing than that.

You see, each and every one of us has the same experience of being born into this world in darkness. We try to understand who we are along the way by figuring each step along the way, stumbling along, always wondering at the deepest level why am I here? Why do I exist? Creation must have a Creator. If I am asking this question, it must mean I was designed to ask this question. If I seek God, it must mean God is seeking me. Where is he? And then it happens.

At some point in our lives, a light shines in the darkness of our existence. That light is Jesus (Easter Candle). He is not just a name that is printed on page or a historical idea collecting dust, but rather a living person. Jesus enters into our existence and shines light on who we are, why we are here and where we are going.

My friends, the Christian faith is unique from all other religions in that the truth of our faith relies solely on the fact of this historical event. The resurrection of Jesus is a historical event worthy of amazement. Let’s look at what we witnessed these past few days. The Gospels are all in agreement that the night Jesus was arrested, the disciples fled. This is striking to me because if you want to start a new religion ... that is not the best propaganda to be putting out there. So, this must have been obviously true and well known at the time because all four gospels report this.

Something happened on this day to convince the disciples to return from hiding in fear to the public square, risking their necks, even giving their lives, to proclaim that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead.

And what made this message even more compelling was, these disciples were not extremists. They were normal people, fishermen, businessmen and such. They had lives they could have gone back to. Further, their message wasn’t very political either as they weren’t looking to start a war or revolution. Quite the contrary, they came out of hiding with a message of God’s love for the world and a commandment to love others, even those who persecute them. For centuries Christians were persecuted, even killed. In some places of the world, this happens even today. We have relics of three martyrs in our altar here of saints who died proclaiming the risen Christ. Why did any of them do that?

It boils down to one reason: Jesus, in fact, rose from the dead. God has, in fact, visited his people. Up to this point, we thought our lives follow the predictable pattern of the universe, we born, we live, we die, and that’s it. And now, we know that death is not the end, our lives have direction, our existence has purpose and, as a result, our lives have changed forever. Life has changed because we have to look at this world now in light of the world to come.

This has implications on how we live our lives in the here and now. The world is no longer about me but about Jesus Christ who died for my sins and rose for my salvation. We are baptized in this faith and remember our baptism because life is no longer just about being born, living and dying. Life now includes resurrection and everlasting life.

It is so easy to live our lives spiritually asleep to the implications of this message. This is because, as we ask the deeper questions about our existence, we also become quite aware of our brokenness. There is a wound deep inside of all of us that we would rather forget. There is a hole inside of us that we fill with all the wrong things. At times, we might even feel hopeless and tempted to despair. We can go through life like that, self-medicating ourselves, unsatisfied by the answers given to us by popular culture. And then, it happens. We find Jesus. We discover he is not just print on a page or a historical idea collecting dust. Jesus is a living person, living now. All we need to do to know him is to open our hearts. Seek him because he is seeking you.

Know him and you will discover that he knows you more than you know yourself. You will discover that his love for you is greater than the sum total of all your faults.

The passion, death and resurrection proves that. God's love for you is greater than the sum total of all your faults and so bring everything that you are to him.

As disciples, we don't need the guidance of this world anymore. We let Jesus' Gospel make sense of our existence because Easter proves that we are not alone in the universe. We have been visited by our Creator and found him to be our savior, Christ and Lord. Alleluia!