

Homily for the Feast of Easter, April 12, 2020

Happy Easter. St. Augustine tells us: **“We are Easter people and Alleluia is our song.”**

In year A we read St. Matthew’s Gospel. In his reading for Easter St. Matthew tells us the real heroes of Good Friday and Easter are the women for they never abandon Jesus at the cross. Mary Magdalen and the other Mary are the first witnesses to the Risen Christ. I’m sure the women are not singing Alleluias as they hurry to the tomb of Jesus on that first Easter morning. In Matthew’s Gospel we are not told why they are going to the tomb but we may presume they were going to the tomb like we might visit the grave of a love one -- to grieve at the death of their loved one, Jesus. The idea of the resurrection of Jesus probably was the furthest thought from their mind even though Jesus had told them He was going to Jerusalem to suffer, to die, and to rise on the third day.

When they approach the tomb there was a sudden earthquake which opened the tomb and an angel, in dazzling clothes was sitting there. The angel announced to them four things:

1. *“Do not be afraid!*
2. *That Jesus was not there. He has been raised just as He had said.*
3. *Come and see the place where He was laid.*
4. *And go quickly and tell the disciples that Jesus is raised and that they are to go to Galilee to see Him.”*

Following this announcement Matthew tells us they were fearful, yet overjoyed at the Resurrection of Jesus. As they run to meet the disciples – Jesus meets them and says: *“Peace be with you.”* The women stopped and hugged Him and Jesus repeated for them: *“Go and tell the brothers to meet Him in Galilee.”*

Why does Jesus tell them to go to Galilee? Remember Galilee was the place where the disciples first met Jesus and where He called them to be His disciples, where they were taught by Him and heard Him preach and where they witnessed so many of His healing miracles. So in Galilee the Risen Jesus would give them their final commission: *“to go to the whole world and preach the Good News telling them to make disciples of all nations. Baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”* Jesus promises that as Emmanuel He would be with us for all eternity. With this commission the Gospel of Matthew ends.

What a colossal undertaking this is – to go to the whole world. And what an even greater promise is made that Jesus would be with us to the end of time.

So, as we celebrate the Resurrection, the victory of Jesus there is no situation we can get into that Jesus is not with us. Jesus is with us during this awful time of the coronavirus. He is with us when we pray and when we read the Scriptures and although we cannot now come together as a community this Easter to eat His Body and drink His Blood, He is still with us. Remember He is with us in our loneliness and in our fears for Jesus promised us He will be with us and so there is never a time He is not here with us. All of this is what Easter tells us. Jesus is the Risen One who is always with us.

No wonder St. Augustine tells us: **“We are Easter people and Alleluia is our song.”**