

A Easter Homily -- April 23-24, 2011  
Focus on Matthew 28:1-10

How many times in the Bible the Lord says to people: “Do not be afraid!”

And how fitting it is that we have a Gospel story this Easter that echoes this very same message: “Do not be afraid!”

It is the core of the Easter message. The angel said to the women at the tomb: “Do not be afraid! I know that you are looking for Jesus the Crucified. He is not here. He has been raised exactly as He promised.”

The message was clear. Jesus was not in the tomb. The Risen Lord is with us now. He is in you and in me. He is here in our assembly, present in our community. And He wants us to be ever mindful that He continues to be with us when we go forth from here.

Better than all the new clothes, new flowers, new beautiful sights, new fragrances that adorn our surroundings and new sounds of “Alleluia!” is the promise of new life Christ gives us. It is a promise that we need not remain enclosed in the tombs of our fears, but instead be filled with new hope because He is truly with us.

The Risen Christ is with the people who have been diligently preparing to be welcomed as full members of our Catholic community. How we thank God for them! We pray that the hope of new life made known in their faith will strengthen our faith as we strive to continue to help them strengthen their faith.

Easter reminds us that our God knows us and our frail natures so very well. All through our lives we are challenged by fears.

When we are children we are afraid of being lost or forgotten.

When we are adolescents we are afraid of being unaccepted or not liked.

Still later, we are afraid of losing those we love and we are afraid of losing what is so important in our everyday lives – our things, our jobs, our sense of purpose.

We never totally escape our fears. They are part of what it means to be human.

But the Risen Lord tells us in so many ways: I am here. Do not be afraid. I have chosen you. Do not be afraid. I am leading you. Do not be afraid.

For the Gospel writer Matthew, belief in the resurrection is not caused by seeing, touching, and hearing. It comes about by believing that God works some wonderful deeds. Matthew wrote to Jewish people who believed in a God who created everything out of nothing. This same God delivered His people at the Red Sea. He led His people into a land flowing with milk and honey. He raised up kings like David to lead God's people, and prophets to speak God's ways so they'd never get lost.

**NOW MATTHEW IS SAYING, LOOK AT JESUS, HE DOES THESE MIGHTY ACTS OF GOD.**

Yes, Jesus gives new life because He who died for you is raised from the dead.

He who died for you will never abandon you.

He who died for you lives for you and calls you to live for Him.

When Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary there is both a message and a mission.

It comes in the form of "Go and tell..."

The resurrection is not a private vision merely for the women who were there at the tomb. The angel told the women to go quickly and tell the disciples.

Then the Lord repeated that message that said not to be afraid, that message that said to go to spread the joyful news.

Our lives give thanks and praise for the new life God gives us.

He calms our fears. He tells us to spread His joy by how we live.

May His promise of new life touch us deeply so that we might touch others with His joy all our days.