

Easter Sunday 2018

Did you know that in the Catholic Tradition Easter is always the first Sunday following the first full moon following the spring equinox? In other words, Easter always occurs in the Northern hemisphere in the early days of spring. There is a certain “power” in spring that forces nature to change from winter doom and gloom to joy and light. Nature comes alive during spring – you can see it in the trees, you can smell it in the air. There is freshness about to burst forth. Nature itself seems poised to reenact the drama of death and resurrection.

Just as nature possesses an innate power so too does the resurrection. During this Easter Season the focus of each weekend liturgy will be on “power.” The “power that flows from the resurrection of Christ. As we heard in the gospel reading it was Mary of Magdala who first experienced this power. She went to the tomb of Jesus that first Easter Sunday morning only to discover that it was empty. This experience empowered her to run to tell Simon Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved what she had seen.

In the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, St. Peter explains how he was commissioned, that is, empowered by the risen Christ to preach and to testify that Jesus is the one appointed by God.

St. Paul in the second reading tells us that those who have been baptized into Christ have already died and risen with him. This was “played-out” last night at the Easter Vigil. Four catechumens walked down the steps into the font one at a time (The font is embedded in the ground to remind us of a grave.). The catechumens stepped into their watery grave where they died to sin through the waters of baptism. They then walked up the steps and were clothed in white garments as a sign of their new life. The power of Jesus’ resurrection brought this about.

How have you experience the power of Jesus' resurrection? Such an experience was not a problem for Mary of Magdala who witnessed the empty tomb. It was not a problem for St. Peter to whom the Risen Lord appeared. It was not a problem for the first Christians because the resurrection demonstrated to them that death is not the end but just the beginning of a new way of living. This was news to them. This was Good News to them.

For us, however, it may be old news. We have heard it all before. We may get more excited about our video games or the latest win of our favorite sport team than we are about the resurrection. But the resurrection still has the power to move us if we let it.

St. Paul in the second reading suggests what this power is like. He says that it causes us to "(t)hink of what is above, not of what is on earth." In other words the resurrection gives us the power to see our lives in a whole different way, from a whole different perspective – from the perspective of an afterlife, from the perspective of heaven.

Such a transcendent perspective reminds us that we don't' have to win every argument with our spouse, we don't' have to climb every mountain we encounter, we don't' have to get even with those who harm us... because there is more to life than what we experience with our senses – there is eternal life. Jesus gives us an insight into this perspective when he tells us "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard what God has prepared for those who love him." How can the power of the resurrection change your life?