

Alleluia, He is risen

This is God's invitation to all of us

To take this to heart

To let the fact of his resurrection, take hold of our hearts

Take hold of our lives

Like the women in our Gospel today

Like the early disciples did

The women were on the way to the tomb

Everything happened so fast

They did not do a proper job of preparing Jesus's body for burial

So they are going back

To finish the job

But who will move the stone?

The stone is huge

6 or 7 ft in diameter

A foot or more thick

And yet when they arrive

The stone has been removed

The power of God has cleared the way

This stone is symbolic of the stone in our lives

The stone that separated mankind from God has been removed

The way to the Father is Jesus Christ

The path is now clear

But what about the stone in my heart?

What is it that separates me from God?

This the disciples had to answer

Each of them in his or her own way

It can be very difficult to believe we can rise with him

We might feel the stone in my life is just too much

So we ask:

Can the God of Genesis

Who created from nothing

The God who made light

Can he not re-create me?

Can the God who led the Israelite nation out of Egypt

The God who freed them from slavery

Can he not free me from my sin?

It is the resurrection that makes all the difference

Remember a few weeks ago

When we read of Lazarus being raised?

He came forth with the burial cloths still binding him

That is not what we have here

The burial cloths are there

The cloth that covered his face is set aside

He is not bound by death

He is alive

This is our statement to the world

We cannot just proclaim it inside a church building

It is not a private thing between me and Jesus

We cannot just proclaim it a couple times a year

We proclaim it and live it every day

Every moment of our lives

It radiates outward into everything we say and do

Especially by taking part in the Eucharist on Sundays during the year

We don't do this so all our problems will go away

We do it so we will have the courage and grace to face them

God doesn't make deals

He makes promises

A promise of love

That will overcome death itself

Let's look at 3 things the resurrection states to the world

3 lessons the world needs desperately today

First, we see that Jesus is the final authority in this world

The empty tomb is the proof of this

All authority has been given to me

In heaven and earth (Mt28)

**Many in our world today think the final word lies with earthly
authority**

The United States, Russia, NATO, the free market

In the passion reading on Good Friday Jesus states

You would have no authority over me

Unless it were granted from above

Second, the resurrection compels us not to be silent

How did he overcome even death?

Through the cross

Did you know that almost every one of the first disciples are martyrs?

They gave their lives as witnesses to Him

They could not be kept silent

Even when it cost them their earthly lives

Like the disciples, our witness must be prophetic

Declaring that Jesus is Lord

Not worldly powers

We are called to be sacrificial

Imitating Jesus on the cross

And we are called to be humbly confident

Knowing we are only servants

But servants of the King of Kings

Where did the disciples get this courage and strength?

The same source we do

The resurrection

And lastly we know the end of the story

Again in Matthew

Jesus tells us *'I will be with you always*

Even to the end of the age

JRR Tolkien puts it this way in *The Lord of the Rings*

Sam asks Gandalf

What's happened to the world?'

And Gandalf replied

'A great shadow has been removed'

In the resurrection, indeed, a great shadow has been removed

The shadow of cowardice and doubt

The shadow of sin and death

What's really happened to the world?

Something good and powerful

Life and truth

The resurrection

Alleluia, He has Risen

God bless and a Happy Easter to all