

Easter Sunday – March 27, 2016

I stand to greet the fervent souls among us on fire with Easter joy. I'm sure your minds are uncluttered by any distractions, doubts, or distress. You are focused serenely and completely on the mystery of the Resurrection we celebrate today. (Pause). That introduction was for all the perfect Christians among us. Now the rest of this homily is for regular, ordinary folks. Including myself.

Today's Easter gospel conceals as much as it reveals. There's no Halleluiahs chorus, no fanfare of trumpets, no choirs of chanting angels, only an empty tomb, some burial cloths, and a large stone rolled away. What happened?

The cast of characters in this scene is not much help. Even when Mary Magdalene saw that the stone had been moved, she was unable to imagine anything other than a grave robbery. We see Peter run to the scene only to enter into the tomb without understanding. Finally, we hear that even the beloved disciple grasped only a portion of the mystery. They did not yet understand the Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.

What are we to conclude from this hide-and-seek rhythm of understanding what it means to know the Risen Lord? Well, a couple of things.

First, we can note that Easter is not the quick and easy answer to Good Friday. Easter takes time to understand and get used to. It's a mystery to be understood slowly, with perhaps lots of false starts along the way. Peter and Paul tell us that we'll know we've begun to comprehend it only as we see how much we are changed by it. It's not for nothing that the Easter season goes on for the next 50 days. Easter takes time.

Second, if Easter faith comes easy for us, be grateful, humble, and patient with those who struggle. If Easter faith comes slowly, after periods of feeling nothing religious at all, even Mother Theresa felt that for several years. But she hung in there, doing what she felt she should with her life. Trust in that.

Easter sets our lives in motion. Where there is real presence, there is real change. Who knows? By the grace of God, someday the power of Jesus' Resurrection will so transform us that people will wonder about us too: What happened?