

Easter Sunday
Sunday April 1st, 2018

The first words of God spoken over creation were, **“Let there be light.”**

Last night at the Easter Vigil as we gathered, we began our worship in darkness.

Then we had the lighting and blessing of the New Easter Fire, the blessing and lighting of the Pascal Candle; and then the lighting of each person’s candle.

Eventually all of the lights in the church were turned on and the candles at the altar were lit. In chapter 8 of John’s Gospel Jesus said to the Pharisees, **“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”** Light in the natural order is essential for life on earth. In the supernatural order light is essential for our faith in God. Jesus Christ is our light of faith.

Mary Magdalene went **“to the tomb early in the morning while it was still dark.”** Mary went in faith, the only light she had, because she still believed and trusted in Jesus, even though she did not yet fully understand. Jesus gave her and us signs that the resurrection had taken place. **“The stone was removed from the tomb.”** Jesus, because He now had a glorified body could have past right through the walls of the tomb without the stone being removed. We know this because on the night of the resurrection, **“when the doors were locked where the disciples were” “Jesus came and stood in their midst.”** Back to the tomb, if the stone had not been removed how would Mary have known that the tomb was empty?

So, Mary went and told Peter and John (the beloved disciple); that the Lord's body had been taken.

“They both ran, but the other disciple (John) ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first.” I wonder if this subtle detail that John outran Peter is the youngster's sly way of saying Peter is old. **“John bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in.”** When Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there and the cloth that had covered His head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place.” These are important details about the cloth. If grave robbers had taken the body of Jesus they would have left the cloths a mess, similarly if a wild animal had gotten into the tomb. We also must remember that Peter, John, and all the disciples had been with Jesus for three years. They were accustomed to Jesus giving signs like: changing water into wine, feeding five thousand, and walking on water. The rolled up cloth is one more sign of who Jesus is and that He had been raised from the dead. **“When John went in,..... he saw and believed.”** John believed that Jesus had in fact been raised from the dead, yet as he also tells us, **“They did not yet understand the Scripture that He had to rise from the dead.”** Perhaps the best way to explain this is with the motto of St. Anselm **“Faith seeking understanding.”** In other words, we do not have to have a full understanding in order to have faith in Jesus.

If that was a requirement then the Church would have fallen apart before it started. Similarly, we need to seek understanding to have a fuller faith in Jesus.

St. Paul shows us today our relationship with Jesus Christ raised from the dead. He tells us, **“If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above.”** He also says, **“For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”** These teachings from St. Paul are in relation to his understanding of our baptism, **“when we died with Christ and rose with Him to new life.”** Here St. Paul is reminding us that not only do we share in the death of Jesus, even more important we share in the resurrection of Jesus.

Sharing in the resurrection of Jesus comes with responsibility, as we find in the Acts of the Apostles. Peter was speaking in the house of a Gentile named Cornelius. Peter preached what we call the Kerygma; the basic body of belief in Jesus. **Teaching, healing, dying and rising.** We are all commissioned to share the Good News, by virtue of our baptism. The Good News is: **“that everyone who believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins through His name.”** For us here at St. Antoninus last night we welcomed into the Church: 7 people through baptism, confirmation and first Eucharist, 5 people for full communion through confirmation and first Eucharist, and 4 Catholic adults that had not yet received confirmation and First Communion. We welcome them, and we know there are

still more out there who are hungering for the Good News. We just have to share it with them.

Jesus Christ raised from the dead tells us that He is the Light of the World. He wants to radiate His light to the world through us the baptized. Our faith in Jesus Christ risen from the dead is confirmed by the empty tomb.

May the Lord Jesus Christ bless all of us in our journey of faith, And, on behalf of Archbishop Schnurr, Bishop Binzer, the faculty and staff of St. Antonius, may all of you have a Blessed Easter Season in Christ.