

Fr. Morelock
Easter Day C
4/17/2022
Luke 24:1-10

The strife is over, the battle done; the victory of life is won. And quite the battle it was. Over the course of Lent we followed Jesus as he made his journey to Golgotha.

He bled in the Garden, offering his entire soul to God on the cusp of his great triumph, his great tribulation, but not before he gathered with his friends, instituted the sacrament of his Body and Blood, and knelt to wash their feet, even the feet of his betrayer.

His command that night was to love, and not just that but to love as he has loved. A new and perfect commandment was given; now that we have been united to him in his body and blood we are able to love perfectly because it is his love that flows out from us, so long as we abide in him.

The battle was then engaged in the Garden when first victory was won when he prayed, "Father, not my will but yours." Perfect obedience was achieved at this moment. Jesus knew what awaited him, the full weight of the world's sins on his shoulders. He was the Lamb of God. He was the unblemished, perfect sacrifice.

He bled in the praetorian, giving his back to the smiters, the full rage of mankind's rebellion directed at its creator, and he opened not his mouth. As our Choir so beautifully sung on Good Friday:

"I led you from slavery to freedom, and drowned your captors in the sea, but you handed me over to your high priests. I led you on your

way in a pillar of cloud, but you led me to Pilate's court. I bore you up with manna in the desert, but you struck me down and scourged me. For you I struck down the kings of Canaan, but you struck my head with a reed. I gave you a royal scepter, but you gave me a crown of thorns. I raised you to the height of majesty, but you raised me high on a cross."

He bled on the road to Calvary, and as he mounted the rough wood of the cross and allowed his hands and feet and side to be peirced, and the earth that he formed in the beginning opened up to receive its creator's blood.

He died there. Darkness covered the land. The earth shook, the dead raised, the curtain of the temple ripped apart, revealing that the Holy of Holies was not in the temple; it was outside the city, breathing his last.

Our Lord's Passion ended on Friday, where after enduring hours of abuse and torture until finally he gave himself up on the cross. Jesus, being both high priest and perfect sacrifice, offered himself for the sins of the whole world. His broken body was taken down from the cross and laid in the tomb.

Jesus had to die. It was his purpose. His death was the ultimate act of love. In doing so he put to death our fallen, sinful nature. That sin which clings so close to us and prevents us from taking part in the supreme, incomprehensible love of God. Jesus died because the wages of sin is death, and he endured that punishment so that we won't have to. Jesus died, which brings us to now.

The darkness of night retreats as the day arrives. The sky turns from black to gray to pink and the sun rises, casting its light on a tomb that

had been occupied, but now lay open. Women gather in front, mourning the loss of their master on whom they had placed all their hopes.

And two angels meet them to say, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen.”

The strife is over. The battle done. As John Chrysostom once so famously preached:

Let us all enter into the joy of the Lord! First and last alike receive your reward; rich and poor rejoice together! Sober and slothful, celebrate the day! You that have kept the fast, and you that have not, rejoice today for the Table is richly laden! Let no one go away hungry. Partake, all, of the cup of faith. Enjoy all the riches of his goodness.

Let no one give at his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again; for forgiveness has risen from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Death of our Savior has set us free. He has destroyed it by enduring it.”

Jesus once said that he makes all things new, and this morning as the Sun has risen we have awoken to a new reality. A new world, once in which God is no longer estranged from his people. He lives among and within them.

Jesus did all of this because he loves us; he truly loves us, and the idea of being cut off from us is repugnant to his nature. His death and resurrection has torn down every barrier that prevented us from approaching. Forgiveness falls all around like a spring thunder storm,

saturating a dry earth that has endured a long and cold winter. And has he forgives us he breathes new life into our flesh.

As Fr. Mark preached on Friday, every cell in our body has opened up to receive the crucified Lord in his incarnate flesh. Flesh and sinew covers dry bones and we find ourselves a new creation in him. So long sin and death, hello to life in the risen Lord.

The strife is over. The battle done. Because Christ is Risen.

“Christ is risen, and you, O death, are annihilated!

Christ is risen, and the evil ones are cast down!

Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice!

Christ is risen, and life is liberated!

Christ is risen, and the tomb is emptied of its dead; for Christ having risen from the dead, is become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep.”

His death and resurrection are the redemption of human nature, the great victory that God has been preparing for since the beginning, to reunite that missing connection between God and his creation since that very first sin in the garden.

Christ is risen! But what do we do now? Mary, Mary, and Joanna must have wondered that before going to tell the eleven, and the closest friends of Jesus, upon hearing it, were confused but they ran to the tomb to see.

Upon encountering the empty tomb, what is our reaction? Do we marvel as the women did along with the disciples? Are we doubtful? Demanding that we see the crucified Lord for ourselves before we believe? What now?

The truth is the Easter miracle that we celebrate this morning carries with it a lot of meanings and implications, the main implication of which is that Jesus bids us to follow after him in his death and resurrection. But more on that as we progress through this 50 day season of Easter.

For now I bid you to simply believe in what has taken place this morning. He is not here, but has risen.”

Brothers and sisters, think anew on the words that Jesus has spoken to you, and understand that belief is the gateway to the new life in Christ. Recommit to a belief that Jesus has done exactly what he said he would do. And let the implications of this belief fall into place.

It's a new world out there, one in which we no longer fear because God is with us, God has conquered on our behalf opening the way of salvation to all who would believe, take up their cross, and likewise share in Christ's resurrection.

I did not mention death because death no longer has any power or hold over us. Not when we believe and abide in the risen Lord.

The strife is over, the battle done. The victory of life is won. Alleluia. Jesus Christ is risen today.

The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia. Amen.