

Easter Sunday, Year B, April 1, 2018

Acts 10.34-43

Psalms 118.1-2, 14-24

I Corinthians 15.19-26

John 20.1-18

Alleluia, the Lord is Risen!! The Lord is Risen, indeed, Alleluia!!!

In the name of God. Amen.

## I.

Easter! Easter confronts us with the greatest challenge of them all: faith in darkness. Just because we know that what we're doing is right does not mean that it will be easy. It certainly does not mean that even our best efforts will prevail. It finally does not mean that what we live for will happen in our lifetime.<sup>1</sup>

Mary Magdalene is our model. She was one of the women who, according to Scripture (Luke 8.3), "follows Jesus, supporting him out of her own substance." She banks her whole life on the fact that the vision of this Jesus would come to fullness.

She believes in him and everything he believes in: She believes in the Beatitudes. She believes that the curing of cripples is a more important moment in time than even the celebration of the Sabbath. She believes in women as he did and in the poor as he did and in the reform of the synagogue. As he did. She believes in him first, before anyone else, and she follows him to the end, even when all the others disappear.

She follows him in the light and, finally, like the rest of us, she follows him in darkness. She goes to the tomb, to the place where it is clear that failure lay. But she goes in the faith that what had come to life in her because of him, even if suppressed in the world around her for a while, could not die. Not in those who had been touched by him. Never in her. Not really.

## II.

If we could take ourselves back and place ourselves in the community that first hears this Gospel proclaimed, we would find ourselves among women and men dressed in dazzling white. They would be the newly baptized, fresh from the Vigil that has just ended.

The Gospels tell us that the baptized have been given faith in a living Lord that cannot be found among the dead aspects of our lives, not within our dried up hopes and failures, not in our focus on the past. Why do you look for the living among the dead?

Why do we seek a living faith amid past memories that make it seem so simple and clear? Why do we seek "good old days" that never were and blind ourselves to the abundant life that is all around us? Why do we glorify the virtues of those who are dead and diminish the life and gifts of the living – the young?

We are the baptized! We must not seek the living among the dead. Jesus is Risen! Showing us that evil will not prevail over good. That fear can be overcome by courage. That death does not have the final word.

The Risen Christ reveals a God present at the very heart of our being as faithful lover, a God who seeks to transform us with abundant life.

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<sup>1</sup> Joan Chittister. An Easter Message. April 6, 2015.

### III.

We are the baptized! We must not seek the living among the dead. We need not wallow in the dead grudges we have toward others, but breathe the living power of forgiveness and reconciliation that is offered us today. We need not hide amid the frustrations and disappointments of our daily lives, repeating words and deeds that rob spouse, children, parents. We can breathe into these relationships the life of care and respect.

We are the baptized! We must not seek the living among the dead. At work, in school, in Church, we need not undermine others in word and deed. We can be a source of the life of honesty and integrity. We need not tear down, but rather build relationships that bring new life to others.

My sisters and brothers, the message of Easter is clear. We are to carry the message of Jesus – to live the life of Jesus here and now. Easter calls us to work – to ministry. We are to confront the world around us with the blessedness of the poor, the outcast, the foreigners, those voiceless for whom Jesus gave his life.

We do this in living out our own baptismal promises so that the living Christ can be experienced by others.

### IV.

When we promise to continue in the apostles' teaching, to come together to pray as a community, to share bread and wine, then people will know Christ lives among us.

When we persevere in resisting evil and ask forgiveness from one another – Christ is alive!

When we proclaim in words and actions the Good News of God's love for everyone – Christ is alive!

When we strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of everyone – Christ is alive!

We must not seek the living among the dead. We are called to seek the living Christ among those living among us.

We carry within ourselves the promise of new life. When we live the ongoing message of the Resurrection itself, the darkness will not overcome as long as we ourselves never blow out the light of Truth in our own hearts.

Alleluia! Alleluia!! Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ has come again! Alleluia! Alleluia!!! Amen.