

The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed!!Alleluia!!

Let me first and foremost wish each one of you a happy and blessed Easter. May the risen Lord sustain you through the power of the Holy Spirit in the days to come. Over these past forty days we have been on a journey with God. We have taken time to introspect in order to know where we have fallen short of God's standards. We have tried to keep our eyes focused on the passion of Christ, his suffering and death and today we celebrate his resurrection.

John records for us that it was very early on the first day of the week, when it was still dark when Mary Magdalene had gone to the tomb and found that the stone had been removed from the entrance. There is an air of excitement and we see Mary Magdalene running to Simon Peter and John. She tells them that they have taken the Lord out of the tomb and that the tomb was empty. Peter and John also run towards the tomb. John reaches first and Peter follows catching up with him. Peter rushes in and John follows in, seeing and believing. All this is breathless eye witness testimony. It was something so shocking, so unexpected, so cataclysmic that the only possible response is indeed breathless haste to find out what was going on, to discover what it means.

The resurrection of Jesus is the beginning of God's new world, a new creation. John's gospel began with the account of creation in the prologue and now talks about the new creation. John recorded for us, that, "In him was life, and the life was the light of the human beings. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb while it is still dark, only to be confronted with the evidence that the son of God had risen and yet she hasn't seen him. We see a little later, when she sees Jesus and imagines him to be the gardener. The new creation has begun and the disciples still did not understand that Jesus had to rise from the dead.

What happens with the resurrection of Jesus? Death and sin were the two enemies which kept human beings in bondage and in fear. The resurrection of Jesus shows that Satan and all the powers and principalities have been defeated on the cross. Death has no power over us and we are set free from the bondage of sin. That is why Paul could say, "Where O death is your victory? Where, O death is your sting? The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law but thanks be to God he has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

N.T. Wright says that if Christ has defeated Satan and death and sin then the new creation has begun and we are called to make it happen in our own world. We are ushering in the new creation when we campaign for making poverty history, for peace and justice in West Asia, for a new start for refugees and asylum seekers, or for a fresh vision where we see our nations without corruption and without power struggles. We take this message to our schools and our hospitals, to our cities and villages. We are a community called to be the Easter people. We are to take the scripture in one hand and the power of God in the other. We are to take a deep breath of the air of new creation which blows through the air on Easter day and find out what we can do to make the new creation happen. The powers of death and hell will oppose you for doing so and you will face battles on the way. We are to go back again and again on the fact of Easter; the enemies are a beaten rabble, God's new creation will win the day and you must be a part of it.

It is all well to be engaged in bringing the new creation to the world while forgetting what we need to do with ourselves. Paul writing to the Colossians says that we are to leave certain old habits in the tomb. He talks about five kinds of sexual immorality and five kinds of anger, talk and behavior. Paul says, "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed which is idolatry." He also says that people of the new creation should rid themselves of anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language from their lips. One is called to speak the truth always and put on the new self who is being renewed in the knowledge of this creator.

As we go out into the world and as a community of the risen Lord, filled with the power of the resurrection, may we truly bring God's new creation into our world, and may we ourselves be transformed by the help of the resident Holy Spirit.