

Easter Sunday 2015

“And they saw the stone removed from the tomb”

On that first Easter morning, when it was still dark, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus. Like everyone who had witnessed the events of Good Friday, she knew Jesus had died a shameful death. Like everyone who had witnessed the crucifixion, she believed the powers of Sin and Death had been victorious. And so she came to the tomb to see the body of Jesus. She came to anoint her Lord for the last time.

But when she came, the stone that had sealed the tomb had already been rolled away. The stone that had been set in place as the final proof of Jesus' death had been removed, and the body of Jesus was no longer there. Distraught and disturbed, Mary ran to Peter and the other disciples: “They had taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him.” For Mary, who was still overcome by sorrow and grief, there was only one explanation: Someone had removed the stone and stolen the body. It was only later, when Mary met the risen Lord, that she understood that it was God who had removed the stone. It was God who had raised Jesus to new and eternal life; it was God who had overcome the power of sin and death.

You see, God is always removing the stones of sin and death that keep us from him, even when we are not aware of it. God is always removing the stones

that would keep us in the grave of despair and sorrow, even when we are not aware of it. God is always removing those barriers that would keep us from his love, even when we are not aware of this.

That is why we proclaim today that Jesus Christ is risen and alive. Jesus Christ is risen and alive because, through a mighty act of power, God raised him from the dead. In a mighty act of a new creation, God brought Jesus into his own life, new and eternal life. Jesus did not simply return to life, he entered the fullness of life, a life we will not understand until we have experienced it. He entered resurrection life.

On this Easter Sunday, God offers his grace to us once more, and no one is excluded. On this Easter Sunday, God offers us the gift of new and eternal life, and all God asks is that we respond in faith. On this Easter Sunday, God offers us the gift of new, resurrection life, if we place our faith in Christ.

Even if it has been a long time since last you shared in the Eucharist with us, you are welcome here. Indeed, you will always welcome here. For God's offer of grace and mercy still reaches out to you; and all you need do is to accept it. God will remove whatever stone or barrier there is that keeps you from his love. God will do what you cannot do. So rejoice and be glad on this day when God offers new and eternal life to all who believe his Son Jesus Christ.