

## **Easter Sunday-B**

*My sisters and brothers in Christ,*

The Gospel at this Mass, from Saint John, tells it all: the followers of Jesus think that He is dead and then they discover the empty tomb and some of them believe that He is alive. And Jesus begins to appear to various followers.

We continue listening to these early followers of Christ. It is their testimony that has been handed down to us. It is from them that we have received the faith. The first testimony this morning is from Saint Peter in the Acts of the Apostles, recounting his own experiences. He speaks from his Jewish culture and speaks of the life and the death of Jesus and then the Resurrection of Jesus. For sure, many of his friends thought he was deluded but many believed him. And so the first Christian communities began with these first followers of Christ evangelizing and saying: Christ died and Christ is risen. Blessed be the name of the Lord!

The second reading, from the Letter to the Colossians, is the testimony of Saint Paul, who at first persecuted these early followers of Jesus. Then some experience changed him forever and he also began to proclaim the death and resurrection of the Lord. He takes a further step today to remind us that we also die in Christ and are raised in Him.

We return to the Gospel of John today where Peter and John run to the tomb. John outruns Peter--a slightly unusual detail, but waits for Peter to enter first--thus speaking about the importance of Peter in this first group of followers. Peter is still not sure what has happened but John sees and believes. Most important for this account is that they did not yet understand the Scripture that he must rise from the dead.

These readings take us to the heart of our own faith in the Risen Lord. We must continually seek to understand the Scriptures, both the Old and the New Testaments. They are the written witnesses that we have to God working among His people and sending a Redeemer--sending Jesus as Christ and Redeemer.

Today on the Easter Day we celebrate the witness of our ancestors in the faith. They have handed down these Scriptures to us in the living tradition of faith within the Church. Jesus died and was raised from the dead. Jesus established a living community of witnesses, the Church, to endure until the end of time in order to proclaim God's marvelous work. With the saints and believers throughout the ages, we also proclaim today: Christ is risen. He is truly risen. The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone. Let us rejoice and be glad in Him.

My sisters and brothers, we must continue giving witness to one another and to those who do not yet believe. May our faith continue to transform us so that we know Jesus personally and proclaim Him because of having met Him in faith. We must roll away the stone that stands before our intellect, the stone that stands before our hearts and wills, and it will be there we find the Risen Christ beckoning us to follow him to eternal life. Alleluia. Amen.

- Fr. David M. Chiantella