

EASTER SUNDAY 2013

© Copyright, 2013. Rev. Larry W. Dorsch, St. Paul Church, Weirton, WV 26062.
All rights reserved. May not be reprinted without permission.

Theme: The Living One

Imagine what our televisions would be like this morning if they had cable service and a 24 hour news cycle at the time of Jesus.

“This is breaking news on CNN. Our Anderson Cooper is live outside the city walls of Jerusalem in Israel. What can you tell us Anderson?”

“Well, Jake, CNN has learned exclusively that Mary of Magdala, alleged by some to be the secret mistress of Jesus of Nazareth, was spotted running from his tomb very early this morning along with a group of other women friends of his.

“You will recall Jesus was crucified by the Romans this past Friday afternoon on the small hill just past my left shoulder.”

“We are told, again exclusively, the women found the stone rolled away from the tomb and the body of the Nazarene gone. Missing.

“We have a film crew on the way to the tomb and should momentarily have live video proving whether it is truly empty. Stay tuned right after this message.”

Can you imagine what it might have been like if the worldwide media had been there to cover the trial and execution of Jesus?

Wow! No wonder God chose to send his son before the printing press, the radio and the internet!

Those who did tell us about the death and resurrection of Jesus, the evangelists, were believers writing for other believers or to convince people to become believers.

They made no pretense about being reporters trying to uncover the unvarnished truth.

They wanted us their readers to know and believe in Jesus as they knew and believed in him.

Thus in the Easter Gospel the Gospel writer Luke gives us his unique perspective on the resurrection as he has the two men at Jesus tomb speak to Mary Magdalene and her companions:

“Why do you seek the Living One among the dead? He is not here. He has been raised.”

Matthew, Mark and John each told their version of the story differently.

Luke, however, wanted to emphasize Jesus as the **“Living One”** and even gently seemed to chastise the women for coming to a cemetery to look for him!

He is the Living One so he is where people are living, not where they are dead.

In fact, in the very next passage of Luke’s Gospel, there is the wonderful story of the Risen Jesus meeting his disciples as they were walking on the road and then as they were eating supper together –is as they were living their lives.

The implications of Luke’s teaching stunningly, breathtakingly obvious: the Risen Jesus, the Living One, is with us where we his disciple are living our lives.

He has not departed for some safe heaven where he watches from afar as we struggle to be faithful.

He is the Living One, risen from the dead, but still present among us.

Thus when and where we gather together in his name: the Living One is in our midst praying with us.

When we undertake a service ministry to feed the hungry, he is beside us feeding them too.

When we bake Easter Bread and gather Easter flowers and take them to the homebound he is the Living One beside us throughout.

But not just in “churchy” stuff but in our everyday lives and work he is the Living One:

---in our homes and families, he is risen from the dead and now lives with us and among us.

---as we try to rear our children with values of service and generosity and God-awareness,

---as we live in society with a sense of responsibility for the common good,

---as we foster a way of peace, non-violence and concern for the least among us,

We do so with the radical conviction the Living One is in our midst.

One of the renown scholars of the resurrection of Jesus in our time, Jesuit Fr. Gerald O’Collins recently wrote:

“Accepting Jesus risen from the dead means involving ourselves with him not as a memory from the past but as a vital [living] presence in our day-to-day existence.” (Believing in the Resurrection, page 173)

Perhaps Fr. Collins and St. Luke were saying much the same thing: namely the resurrection of Jesus is not about once a year remembering an event from long ago.

Rather, the resurrection of Jesus is celebrating the Living One, Jesus the Christ, victorious over sins and death, a Living Presence always with us who accept him.

The Living One also at work in us and in the world until all creation is raised up and transformed into a new creation for the eternal glory of God.

Sisters and brothers, it is this Living One we join people throughout the world in celebrating today.

But the Living One is himself present among us now.

He lifts his voice in praise of the Father with us.

He invites us to come to the table and offer his own Body and Blood as our resurrection offering of praise this Easter.

To you, holy Living One, be glory and praise. Amen. Alleluia.