

Fr Michael's Musings
April 2022

This month, we celebrate Easter, the Resurrection of our Lord. My good friend and mentor, Father Guy, often uses the Resurrection as the most powerful example of the understanding that our ways are not God's ways. Think about it. If we had been Jesus, and we were going to rise from the dead after a horrific and unjust persecution and Crucifixion, we would have done it with the largest possible audience and in the most public and powerful display imaginable. Instead, the Gospel accounts reveal that the Resurrection was very personal and intimate. We don't know for sure how many people He appeared to after His Resurrection. We do have historical accounts of some of those visitations.

The first was to Mary Magdalene. Jesus had raised Mary's brother Lazarus in a very public miracle just a short time earlier. In His prayer to the Father just before Lazarus was raised, He said, 'Father, I know you are always with me, and you always hear me, but for the benefit of these who will be witnesses, I ask you publicly for this miracle, so that all who see it may know that I am your Son'. When he comes to Mary Magdalene after His own Resurrection, His appearance is entirely different. He meets her one on one. He comforts her grieving of His loss. He lifts her up and restores her faith and hope and understanding that she has not lost Him, but truly found Him.

Then he appeared to His Apostles several times. You can imagine that His appearance was, actually, a shocking and frightening experience. The Apostles had just betrayed Him, denied Him, and abandoned Him. They had good reason to fear Him, and yet, as He comes to them in the upper room where they were hiding, He says, "Peace be with you". He forgives them. He encourages them. He cures their disbelief. He directs them to the mission He had given them. He fortifies them with the Holy Spirit, and gives them understanding and courage and faith.

On Easter Sunday, the Church has its grand celebration of the Resurrection. We should not lose track of the fact that Easter is also highly personal and intimate for us. Jesus addresses our fears of mortality and the pain of separation by death from the ones we love. He reminds us that His will for us is to be at peace with God, to know that we have been forgiven, reconciled and reunited in eternal love and life. He also reminds us that He has commissioned work for us. He has given us people in our lives who look to us for a good example of Christian love, charity, forgiveness and patience. Easter is the Church's greatest celebration. It is also the opportunity that Jesus uses to speak personally to our hearts and souls, and to remind us that we are restored to His love and the beneficiaries of His grace.

Hallelujah, the Lord is risen. The Lord is risen indeed. Hallelujah, Hallelujah.