

20260405. Easter Sunday. Resurrection.

This resurrection event that we celebrate, did it really happen? That is a good question, and no generation, no person of faith is exempt from asking it. The disciples asked this question. In fact, the early Christian community often wrote this question into the stories that we now call the Gospels.

Consider, for example, the story of the disciples in the boat in the middle of the night in a rough sea. When they see Jesus as he is walking toward them, they cry out that it is a ghost. Surely, as those earliest Christians aged and found all kinds of trouble in their lives, they must have wondered about the reality of Jesus.

Was it real? There were no cameras. There was no CNN or FOX News to report the event. Most of the resurrection stories were real to the few who saw Christ, but they were at the same time also mysterious and so out of the ordinary that the disciples often took a long time to figure out that it really was Jesus.

And now it's close to 2000 years later with scant direct evidence. All we have is a book which different branches of Christianity interpret in a variety of ways, leaving many believers wondering and sometimes confused.

So, is it real? Did it happen?

I think the only way to answer that question is with another question: Are you happening? Are you real? Are you fully alive? Are you fully in love? Do you feel the river of life flowing in you and through you? Can you feel the rhythm of love? Are you forgiving as Christ is forgiving? Is there generosity and mercy in your heart, in your words, and in your actions?

Even if you are down and out this morning, do you still have hope? If you came here with burdens this morning, do you believe that they can be shared? That they can be lifted? Is a certain freedom of life flowing through your veins?

I am not suggesting that the Resurrection of Christ is a completely subjective experience or that the Resurrection is dependent on how we feel. But at some level, Resurrection doesn't happen unless it is happening in us.

It is one thing to say Christ is risen. That is a dogma, that is Creed. It is another thing to say: Christ is risen, and I also live with him. That is Resurrection.

We know the power of resurrection when we acknowledge the power of the presence of God, the power of prayer, the power of the Eucharist, the power of sharing a meal together. Resurrection is not real without these. Resurrection happens because there are people who are willing to testify to its power by living it. Are you one of those people?

In his letter to the Philippians, the apostle Paul writes about living a life of practicing resurrection: *“To know him (Jesus) and the power of his resurrection and [the] sharing of his sufferings by being conformed to his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. It is not that I have already taken hold of it or have already attained perfect maturity, but I continue my pursuit in hope that I may possess it, since I have indeed been taken possession of by Christ [Jesus]. Brothers, I, for my part, do not consider myself to have taken possession. Just one thing: forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God’s upward calling, in Christ Jesus.”* (Phi 3:10-14)

Resurrection happens when we know Jesus; when we know Jesus in a personal, intimate relationship, rather than just following religious rules.

Resurrection happens when we experience God's supernatural strength and Grace in our daily lives.

Resurrection happens when we understand that following Jesus involves both joy and hardship.

Resurrection happens when we admit we are not perfect and look forward to a spiritual journey ahead of us.

Resurrection happens when we truly love, when we forgive, and when we are ready to forget what lies behind... When we choose to stop dwelling on our past mistakes (or achievements), and instead, focus all our energy on moving forward to a life in the full presence of Christ.

On this beautiful morning of Easter, may our almighty God bless every one of you and your beautiful families.

Resurrection doesn't happen unless it is happening in us.

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Ps 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Col 3:1-4

Jn 20:1-9

** Inspired by an Easter homily by Fr. Jeff Godecker, 2000.*