

Easter Day C

Alleluia! Christ is risen! The Lord is Risen Indeed! Alleluia! From our music today, to the reminders of Spring in the birth of our visiting baby ewe lambs and rabbits, we sing out God's praise that the Lord is my strength and my song and He has become my salvation.

Today the Christian world rejoices in the hope of life beyond the grave and the joy of serving Jesus Christ our Risen Savior every day. Now we remember what all that Lent and Passion talk is all about.

“Remember” is central to the gospel today. Remembering is good news when the people of God finally connect sacrifice with New Life.

For if we forget this day we find our hands full of preparations, full of spice, having all the “right” things we were supposed to do, in order to bury the dead. It can be good to forget. The past must be buried and done properly so life can go on. Yet we find to our distress only emptiness when hope is not found. Jesus body was represented hope to his disciples. It was all they had left after their Lord's rejection and crucifixion. Their fear, their grief, their loss caused them to forget his words.

To forget that Jesus lives is only to have an empty tomb. To forget that He overcame sin and death is to be left with confusion and fear when we go to the grave. Remember!

“Remember, how he told you...” the angels said. We don't always remember. Even after taking fish oil and seeing an improvement in my memory, those pre-senior moments still creep in. Isn't wonderful when we have people in our lives to remind us of things that are important? Calendars don't help much if you forget to look at them. We forget to keep track of time despite having the best gadgets ever. Yet, the angels in our lives that remind us make such a difference! God sends us angels into our lives to remind us of the vital things of life.

After the first witnesses to Christ's tomb heard the good news from the angels, they returned. They were elated to remember that the words of Jesus were true. Now they could connect his death, burial and rising from the grave. Remembering his words led them to overcome their fear and grief. Now they would return – but the others had not made the connection. They must return and be the angels for

their brothers. They had to give the good news and help the others hiding in fear to connect Jesus story. Then all would understand.

We in the same way connect Jesus life, death and resurrection this day. Today his suffering makes a little more sense. Jesus rising doesn't answer all the questions about suffering, but it helps us to ask them with faith that we will remember him as he lived, as he taught, as he suffered and that he returned to tell us the whole story. And this gift of memory we are given will bring us back to the memory of loved ones whose lives taught us both in health and in suffering. And someday they too will return and show us how it all connected to our story.

Each person we have touched, whose lives have touched ours will one day rise up to tell us the missing chapters of stories we did not understand but longed for so we could feel completed. The angels completed the story of Jesus for the women. They in turn completed the story for the men. And then the men went on and did the same for the entire world.

People of God our personal stories are woven into the fabric of Jesus love. Our lives and his life are a part of a growing matrix of lives joined together like patches sewn into a quilt. Such quilts sewn together over many years will eventually glorify God, because they will unite us, make us strong and bring a smile to God's holy face.

Remember! Remember this story of love so great that it could not all be written down! Remember the tale of Jesus life, for in it you will make sense of your own.

And now I understand a little more when I read that verse in Hebrews 12:2 about Christ's sufferings: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the **joy set before him** endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.." Alleluia! Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen.