



April 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

These words of celebration are heard many times throughout the Easter season, but they were not the initial reaction experienced that Resurrection morning. When Mary Magdala approached the tomb of our Lord early that morning and found it was empty, her words to the Disciples were those of fear – “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they put him.” (John 20:2) Further in John’s Gospel, we read that Peter and John “did not yet understand the scripture that He had to rise from the dead,” (John 20:9) and so then, they returned home.

In this moment, the Disciples were experiencing a lack of hope, possibly even despair. But this despair quickly turns to joy and celebration as Christ reveals Himself to Mary Magdala and then to the Disciples gathered in the locked room.

In the Sequence for Easter Sunday, we read,

*Speak, Mary, declaring
What you saw, wayfaring.
“The tomb of Christ, who is living,
The glory of Jesus’ resurrection:
bright angels attesting,
The shroud and napkin resting.
Yes, Christ my hope is arisen:
to Galilee he goes before you.”*

“Christ my hope is arisen; to Galilee he goes before you.” What beautiful words to remind us that Christ is always before us, always there to lead us. Our world of late may make it seem like the tomb is empty and we “don’t know where they have taken Him.” But, the empty tomb is the reason we rejoice at Easter. It is only because of that empty tomb, because of His sacrifice on Good Friday, that we have the reassurance that our Risen Christ has defeated death and He is the light of the world. He is the reason we can have hope that all things, even the things that are difficult to understand, are in His control. During times of darkness, our Lord is always there. He is always showing His love, compassion, and mercy. Nothing will overcome us with Christ by our side.

Wherever we find ourselves this Easter on our life’s journey, may we be like Mary shouting the good news of Christ’s Resurrection. Christ is risen! Alleluia!

In Christ,

Most Reverend Ronald W. Gainer
Bishop of Harrisburg