

***I have risen and am still with you, alleluia. You have placed  
your hand upon me; this knowledge of you is wonderful, alleluia!***  
Easter Sunday entrance chant

*I have risen, and am still with you.* That's the joyful note that is sounded from the first moment of today's glorious Easter liturgy. *This knowledge of you is wonderful*, the entrance chant goes on to say. Christ our Savior has triumphed over the powers of sin and death. *They put him to death, but God raised him on the third day*, St. Peter assures us; and this knowledge is indeed wonderful. In these days of worldwide pandemic and death, of the disruption of our lives which prevents the regular celebration of the Christian mysteries, the Lord assures us: *I have risen and am still with you.*

We need to realize and to cling to this truth in these days more than ever; to let it fill our minds and hearts with the peace, the hope, yes even the joy that the world needs from us now more than ever. And it's precisely in these trying times that it can be so hard what the Easter message means. When Mary Magdalene *first saw the stone removed from the tomb* she thought *they must have taken the Lord's body from the tomb*. When *Peter and John, the other disciple, arrived and saw the burial cloths there neatly rolled up they didn't understand* at first *that he had risen from the dead*. It was only after he later appeared to them that they realized what we sang in the Easter sequence today.

On the cross the forces of love and goodness, truth and light were locked in mortal combat with the armies of sin and evil, darkness and death. Much as our world today is locked in combat with this disease that threatens so many. In Christ, the Son of God, the source of all goodness, life and love, everything which makes life worthwhile, all that is beautiful, noble and inspiring did battle with the dark and demonic powers which grind us down in life, with all that's deceitful and degrading, which sucks people down to destruction and robs us of all that's dear to us. And in Jesus, life and goodness won, won eternally. In the resurrection they won once and for all, forever.

This is the mystery at the heart of our Christian life, at the heart of our Catholic faith. All over the world our triumphant Captain of Life bestows the fruits of his victory on souls born anew through baptism, to become children of God and heirs of eternal life. Through baptism He has freed us from the dominion of darkness and death and raised us to a new and divine life with Himself: to fight with divine strength alongside Him, with the weapons of goodness, love and truth to bring the message and power of his salvation to all around us.

When *God raised Jesus on the third day*, the 1st reading reminds us, he became *visible, not to all the people, but only to the witnesses chosen by God, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead*. Like *Mary of Magdala* who found his tomb empty on Easter morning, we too have come on this *first day of the week* seeking Jesus. Like *Simon Peter, and the other disciple* Jesus loved, we don't at first see him, but we believe that *he eats and drinks with us* in this holy communion. And by our baptism, he *commissions us as his witnesses to testify to people that he is risen and still with us*.

*So let us celebrate the feast with sincerity*, as St. Paul urges us, realizing that, even in the midst of our troubles: *This is the day the Lord has made: so let us even now and especially now, rejoice and be glad.*