

Today we commemorate the resurrection of our Lord. Today we celebrate with Alleluias and bells. We sing once more the great Gloria. But, I ask myself and I ask you, where were the Alleluias that first Easter morning?

It was still dark. Mary Magdalene found the stone that had closed Jesus's tomb had been moved. Where was Jesus's body? She and those with her (remember that she said “we”) ran to tell Peter. Mary told him: “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him” (John 20:2). They all ran back together, Peter and another disciple – the one called the beloved – along with Mary and the women. And Jesus was gone. They found only the linen wrappings, but they were put in an orderly fashion – so this was not the work of grave robbers. The body had not been stolen. (20:7). Unlike Lazarus who had to be unbound when he was raised from the dead, Jesus did not need unbinding. He must have taken off the burial wrappings himself.

When the beloved disciple saw this he trusted, he believed, he understood that God was somehow active in the missing body his friend and teacher. But Peter did not understand. And neither of them fully grasped the significance of the empty tomb. And so the two disciples went home. They would not know how this fitted into God's plan because they had not yet received the Holy Spirit.

But Mary, Mary stayed there in the cemetery. She wept for her loss – for the loss of the light of her life – the light of the world. In her grief, all was darkness to her. Her sorrow was so great that she nearly despaired until she saw two heavenly messengers. Imagine the light of two bright angels in dazzling white inside a dark cave. Mary began to come out of the darkness when she saw them sitting where Jesus's body should have been. They asked why she was crying (20:13), and she told them. Then she turned and saw Jesus, but she did not recognize him until he spoke her name: Mary!” She recognized

him – the light came back into her life when he called her by her name. Only then did she have cause to celebrate. Alleluia! She was ready to resume the relationship she had enjoyed with Jesus previously. But something had changed. Now they were in a new relationship. Jesus had passed into an entirely different reality. She could no longer hold on to him (20:17). But then the light truly came on for Mary – as it for us. We Christians gained a new relationship with God through Christ. Jesus told Mary to go to the disciples and say to them: “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God” (20:17). So God truly is Jesus’s Father. And the disciples – and we – by Christ Jesus’s act of love can claim God as our own Father as well. Now that is something to celebrate!

Earlier when asked: “Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself ...?” Jesus answered saying: “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them” (14:22).

Christ Jesus came back to us again today. He has made his home with us. Jesus manifested himself to the disciples – and to us – through love and the indwelling presence of the Father and the Son which comes through the Holy Spirit. Alleluia! Now that is good news.

My friends, today is the first day of the rest of our lives. Cliché, yes, but this day, the light has come on for us, just as it did for Mary Magdalene. We are loved. God loves us. God is our father. Jesus is our brother. Alleluia!

So what now? What are we to do with all this love?

I would like to read you an Easter message from Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada:

“I have seen the Lord”

That’s the incredible breaking news that Mary Magdalene has for the disciples! Her encounter with Jesus in all his Resurrection glory is overwhelmingly joyful. But Jesus says the joy they share must be shared with all the disciples.

From the garden Mary runs through the streets, tears up a set of steps a couple at a time and pounds on the door of a house where they are staying. Panting for breath she blurts out the news, “I have seen the Lord!” He is Risen! I saw Him! He spoke to me! I held him! He sent me to tell you! He is Risen!”

This is Mary of Magdala, Apostle to the Apostles. All these centuries later, she still leaps up high and leads the whole Church in the Dance of the Resurrection. With her and all who have borne a faithful witness to the Resurrection, we believe in the Living Lord. He reveals his holy presence in bread and wine. He draws near and walks with us through ordinary days and extraordinary, through times of joy and times of grief. Into our hearts he speaks a word of peace and into the soul of the Church a word of grace. Calling us to be His Body in the world, he breathes his Spirit into all our ministries, keeping them fresh and focused for the times in which we live.

Thankful for all our blessings in Christ, may our witness to his Resurrection be marked by the joy and passion of Mary Magdalene! May these Great Fifty Days be wonderfully glad! And through our liturgy and our living, our song and our service, may the world know that we truly are an Easter People!

“Alleluia! Christ is Risen,
The Lord is Risen indeed.
Alleluia!”

My brothers and sisters, Christ has come back to us to lighten our darkness. And we too must share the good news – the good news of the resurrection. Jesus the Christ has been raised from the dead – by his Father, our Father, by his God, our God. Mary Magdalene went to the disciples to spread the word – to spread the good news. “I have seen the Lord!” she said. I believe that this Easter morning that is what we are called to do. We are to spread the good news of the Gospel – the news that that Jesus Christ, the Jesus who is the Son of God, the Jesus who is our brother, the Jesus who alone can bring light into our darkness, the Jesus who loves us, has been raised from the dead. Alleluia! We have seen him. We have come to know him. Through the Holy Eucharist he abides in us, and we in him. Alleluia!

Like Mary Magdalene, our time to weep is over. We have been in the darkness for three days; maybe we have been in the darkness for much longer. But when the Lord

calls our name we recognize him and we see and feel his love, and the darkness is replaced with light and joy. May we always seek that light. May we come to the Lord's table for heavenly food so that he may abide in us and we in him. May his body and blood equip us to fulfill our callings to go and tell the good news of the resurrection of our brother Jesus the Christ.

Lord, may it be so.

Amen.