

Saint Peter's Episcopal Church

(Anglican)

The Very Rev. Steve L. Foster Rector

April 7th, 2020 – Tuesday in Holy Week.

Easter Message to Parishioners

Dear Friends in Christ:

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see him'" Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me." (Matthew 28:5-7, 10)

The preceding pericope (or passage) from Matthew's account of the Resurrection when the women went to find the empty tomb, resulting in their becoming fearful and hopeless. The angel allays their fears with words of hope. The Crucified Christ is raised and is going ahead to Galilee. As the women were going quickly and tell his disciples, they met the Risen Christ. Jesus further encouraged them not to be afraid but go and tell his friends to go to Galilee.

My sisters and brothers, I greet you in the name of our Resurrected Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as I echo the sentiments of the angel 'go quickly and tell his disciples'. As Easter people, we proclaim the good news. Salvation has been won. The last enemy, death, has been conquered. How do we take heed of the angel's prompting? By Baptism, we are called to follow Christ and share the gift of the new life through faith.

Yes, we may say that ought to be the tone of the season. But I am sure many of us, if not all of us, are not in that space mentally, physically or emotionally. As we look, listen and experience, the news that is carried mostly on our lips, is another statistic, increasing deaths, or it is closer to home. Regardless of the sentiment, the human family is in turmoil beyond our imagining because of COVID19. As a global community, we have been ravished and made to feel powerless or even hopeless. Yet, when we return to that powerful Easter message, Jesus allays the fears of the women and does the same for us. The challenge for us is, how we reduce the "noise" from the media and the other sources, to focus on Jesus' message of hope and life.

The late German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer reminds us, "Christ did not come into the world that we might understand him. But that we might cling to him that we might simply let ourselves be swept away by him into the immense event of the Resurrection." As we are "swept away" let our witness continuously resound as people

of hope and faith. Even if we can only display it through social distancing and sheltering in place.

This season of Easter highlights the movement from death to life, in the same way there is darkness to light, the bleak winter to cheerful spring. May we pray in this season of COVID19, and remind ourselves, there will be victory in Jesus. With God's guidance there will be a cure, humanity will be healed. The global community will be restored to the earth which God intended. Our work in the here and now, is spreading the good news of life and hope, in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. If like me, you are confident and firmly believe this, I invite you to stay safe, stay in place and share it with others.

May you have a Blessed Easter and renewed commitment as disciples of our Risen Lord.

“Alleluia. Christ is risen. The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia: stay in place and stay safe but quickly tell the disciples.”

Yours in Christ,

The Very Reverend Steve L. Foster
Rector