

Statement for Website  
From Fr. Michael Basque

12 April 2020

First, a few things you need to know.

- A number of parishioners under the direction of Debbie and Tim Tessier have produced an Easter Sunday Liturgy which will be available on You-Tube and the Parish Facebook page. Please consult the Facebook page to find the link so you will be able to watch it.
- I never realized the Easter Bunny's last name. The Easter Bunny left us a wonder Easter Card which captures what this feast is all about. Thank-you to Matthew and Caitland for your wonderful gift.

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I am a morning person. I get out of bed before 5:00 AM on weekdays and 6:00 AM on weekends. When I do, I am full of energy and ready to take on the world. However, experience has taught me not everyone is like me. For this reason, I try to retrain my energy until at least 10:00 AM when everyone else has had a chance to transition into the day.

In today's Gospel, Mary Magdalene, Peter and the Beloved Disciple encounter evidence of the risen Christ but don't quite know what to make of it. I am not certain whether these three disciples were morning people, but it looks like what they experienced might be similar to someone who is not a morning person running into another individual who is full of energy at the start of the day.

You couldn't blame Mary Magdalene, Peter and the Beloved Disciple for the mental state they were in when confronted with this situation. They had left everything to follow Jesus. They had likely placed all their hope in his message and mission. In the preceding days, Jesus had been betrayed by a disciple for thirty pieces of silver while another one publicly denied knowing him three times. He had been arrested, convicted of a serious crime with false evidence, tortured, dragged to his place of execution, publicly ridiculed while on the cross and died in a humiliating and painful way. All their hopes were shattered. When Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw the stone in front of it rolled away, she may have concluded the grave had been robbed (a common crime at that time). She goes to Peter and the Beloved Disciple with the news. As they arrive at the tomb to see what happened, who could blame them for feeling a little confused and overwhelmed. Peter's examination of the tomb shows it was not grave robbery. Thieves don't clean up after themselves. Yet, Peter doesn't know what happened. The Beloved Disciple sees and believes, but we aren't sure what that means. He might have known Jesus rose from the dead but what would that mean for the lives of himself and the other disciples. After Peter and the Beloved Disciple leave, Mary Magdalene remains behind and encounters the risen Jesus. But, she thinks he is the gardener and then promises to take the body away. Unless she is into body-building, it is highly unlikely Mary could transport the body of a grown male all by herself. Then, Jesus says "Mary" and she recognizes who is speaking to her. She is given the mission of sharing news of Christ's resurrection with the disciples. But, would they believe her? The situation remains confused and fluid.

This Easter, many people are not filled with the hope and joy normally associated with this feast because of the Covid 19 pandemic. The number of new cases and deaths is starting to level off. No one knows what the future will bring. Will there be a second wave of infections if people start ignoring the restrictions imposed by health officials? How long will the government have to pump money into the economy to keep it afloat but drive up the debt it must repay? Will people have jobs when this situation is over? You can't blame them for feeling a little like Mary Magdalene, Peter and the Beloved Disciple: worried, confused and afraid.

Catholics and other people of faith have the knowledge God will not abandon us but walk beside us every step of the way. Christians know Jesus rose on Easter morning to show his power over death and that we have nothing to fear. Yet, they must avoid being like a morning person before 10:00 AM. Many people have no real faith. Our words of hope and joy may seem wishful thinking. Others, including Catholics, have weak faith and may not be able to absorb the positive message we offer. At times like this, Catholics and other people of faith must tread carefully. They must be gentle and patient with those who may be in a fragile condition. Sometimes, it is better to speak through actions than words. If we believe in the Easter message, we can offer a smile to people as we wait in line at the grocery store or bank. We can wash our hands or practice social distancing when we see others not doing so. We can do kind deeds without being asked and look out for the vulnerable like the elderly or poor without expecting thanks. We can show in these ways that we get the Easter message and want to share it with others.

Easter's message of hope and joy can seem overpowering to some. But, that doesn't mean they don't need to hear it.