

Dear Friends,

As the women went early to the tomb their hearts questioned, "Who will roll back the stone for us?" Yet as they neared the burial site of Jesus the first sign of something great confronted them: the mammoth stone had been moved; the tomb was open! "On entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe." The women were the first to see this great sign, the empty tomb; and they were the first to enter.

What must it have been like for them? Wasn't the reason they set out for Jesus' tomb the same reason we set out for Mass this Easter morning, to enter into the mystery of God's immense love? To be a follower of Jesus, to celebrate Easter is to enter into this great mystery.

Entering the mystery of God's love demands that we cannot be afraid of letting go of the past. To enter into the mystery of Easter is to let go of how we once looked at life – from our perspective – to looking at life from God's perspective – with a new heart, with God's heart. Easter is not easy. It always includes Good Friday. It always includes a cross and death; it always includes letting go of how we lived for how God created us to live. Easter challenges us to believe in the new thing God wants to do for us who believe in him.

To accept the mystery of Easter we must be open to humility, be willing to come down off our pedestals - our presumptions and our perceptions. Humility entails knowing that there is one God, and we are not him. We are creatures with strengths and weaknesses, sinners in need of forgiveness; men, women and young people whose sins God-in-the-flesh willingly took to his cross because he loves us as no one loves us. We are sinners all, redeemed by the one true God.

To enter into the mystery of Easter love we must be like the women in Mark's Gospel. They not only "followed Jesus when he was in Galilee and ministered to him," they kept watch for the first rays of dawn that they might go to his tomb. They were not afraid; amazed soon enough, yes, but not afraid. They were not afraid because their walk with him all those years filled their hearts with love. Their hearts were no longer closed; their hearts belonged to him. They returned with all their hearts to God, and he transformed their hearts into images of his own sacred heart. With those beautiful hearts open to him they went to his tomb and found the tomb opened and entered, and their lives were never the same again.

May we learn from these women. May our hearts always be open to God. May we enter into the new life he gives us today and never look back.

*Easter peace and blessings,
Fr. John*

