

The Bishop's Message  
April 2009

EASTER JOY

“Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!” That is the appropriately joyful acclamation of the Easter reality.

But can you imagine the various and sundry emotions in the hearts of the disciples on that first Easter Day? First, the continuing pain, disappointment, fear and despair of Jesus' death on the Cross had to be all too fresh and outright numbing. Their best hope for the future had been dashed by the tragic events of the Friday just two days before. Not only did it appear their Deliverer had been defeated and crushed, but now there was a real and bone chilling threat that they were being sought by the authorities, both Jewish and Roman, as criminals for being co-conspirators with their condemned and executed Leader. Even the women's report to the Apostles of the empty tomb must have torn them apart with confusion, denial and even disbelief.

Consider especially the two followers of Jesus who were traveling to Emmaus on that first day of the week (Lk 24:13-35). Their journey from Jerusalem, itself, may very well have been an attempt to escape it all. The Stranger they met on the road heard them out and then, incredibly enough, lectured them on how the Scriptures give context and meaning to all that had taken place. Now they had still another emotion with which to deal in what must have been their already overburdened hearts.

However, at the breaking of the bread, all became clear. Their eyes were opened and they were able to see at last. With burning hearts at the words of the now recognized Christ, the flames of faith and joy were ignited in each of them.

No longer exhausted by emotional stress and physical exertion, but renewed by the encounter they just had with the Christ, they raced back to a still dangerous Jerusalem with hearts overflowing with the joyful reality that “Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!”

By God's grace and to His glory, may each of us meet anew the risen Christ this Eastertide, and though our experience may not be as dramatic as that of the disciples going to Emmaus, may it be ever so profound and life-changing!