

Easter Sunday

April 12

We stand before the empty tomb and join Christians around the world in proclaiming: “Jesus has arisen! God has raised him from the dead!” The forces of evil and death itself have been overcome. Alleluia!

The light of the Paschal Candle shines brightly -- dispelling the darkness, reminding us that Jesus is the Light of the World. No darkness -- no matter how evil or how extensive-- can ultimately overcome it. This is our firm belief proclaimed through two thousand years by the community of faith. But what does it mean for us today when we are physically separated by the coronavirus? And when we are able to return to at least some of our daily routines, will we carry the light of Christ within us? Will we allow it to make a difference in our lives, our thoughts, our attitudes?

Pope Francis has said that at times we ourselves live as though we ourselves were in a tomb. What are the rocks that imprison us? Anger, boulders of our past lives, the heavy burdens we carry? Past hurts, present suffering, anxieties about the future? At this moment, we may feel powerless in the face of so much that nearly overwhelms us, leading us to despair. Who will remove the rock at the entrance of our tomb that prevents us from moving out? How can we allow the Lord of light and love to enter our lives and grant us new life?

The first stone to be removed, the Holy Father has said, is “the lack of hope that imprisons us within ourselves. May the Lord free us from this trap, from being Christians without hope, who live as if the Lord were not risen, as if our problems were the center of our lives.”

God is with us just as he was with his beloved Son whom he raised from the dead. The risen Lord is with us every day! He will help us carry our heavy burdens. The Holy Spirit will guide us and give us the strength to continue our pilgrim way. Nothing and no one can separate us from God’s love! That is the message of Easter!

Let us allow the word of God to remove the stone that seals our tomb, to allow us to walk again in the light of Christ -- bringing that light to everyone whom we encounter -- and to work together in that light for the building up of God’s kingdom of justice and peace. Christ is risen! Alleluia! Let us be people filled with hope!