

## Shattering Good News • An Easter Message



Rafael, Resurrection of Christ (c. 1499-1510),  
Sao Paulo Museum of Art

For the past year, the whole world has been in awe of the Coronavirus in our midst. Every day and all day, we hear the suffering COVID-19 breaks in our country and the world.

Holding our breath, we hope that the arrival of vaccines and the measures we have embraced to keep everyone safe will fulfill the slogan, “Ça va bien aller” – “It’s going to be all right”.

Many individuals have said that after the lockdowns nothing will be the same. And that includes our experience of church and our life of faith.

The Bible describes the Paschal Mystery—the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—in similar terms, one of epic proportions and shattering significance.

On Calvary, when the centurion and those with him keeping watch over Jesus witnessed the way he died they were in awe and confessed, “Truly this man was God’s Son!”

On Easter morning several women went to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus, asking themselves who would roll back the stone from the entrance

to the tomb.

Looking up, they found the stone moved aside and a divine messenger sitting there and saying Jesus was no longer in the grip of death. He urged the women to not be afraid: Jesus, who was crucified had risen. They were to go and report this to his disciples.

Our faith experience should parallel that of the women and other disciples who, on meeting the risen Lord, became believers. Filled with the Holy Spirit, they began spreading the Good News of God’s love and forgiveness.

The news of Jesus’ resurrection, when it touches peoples’ lives, has similar effects. First the experience of the Risen Lord shakes us up. Then it challenges us to share the news we have come to believe.

Such sharing of the Christian message will be difficult in a culture like ours. Our current circumstances require us to imagine a new way of evangelizing—of spreading the Good News. Recently, priests and people have taken to social media to express our religious life “virtually” on Zoom, Facebook and other means. But our life of faith cannot be lived indefinitely in a virtual mode.

Researchers have now developed vaccines to help our bodies produce antibodies that will protect us from the virus. By analogy, we might wonder whether some people have been immunized against the Christian faith. How then might we develop an antidote so that they might be evangelized anew?

Perhaps earlier on in their lives they got a mild and ineffective dose of the Christian story, which they took to be the real thing. Unimpressed, they turned away, looking elsewhere for meaning and purpose in life.

Truly knowing Christ and the power of his resurrection changes us to the core of our being! I see this whenever I hear young people speak of the transformation Christ works in their lives. Older people, too, tell what happens to them when notions about God, Christ and the Church become real. I’ve seen it in my own life.

No one in our world is completely resistant to grace, to the beautiful message of Jesus, and to examples we can give of genuine service and forgiving love. This should give us hope at Easter and help our resolve to proclaim Christ where we study, work and play.

This health crisis has helped us find new heroes in the scientists, in the medical and front-line workers, in the pharmacy and grocery store workers and even in the many truckers who move goods along Highway 11. We need heroic messengers of the Easter message.

Let us recall that the Christian message spread rapidly in the ancient Roman Empire—one at times officially hostile to Christianity—in a society that was much more cruel and uncaring, violent and sexually chaotic than today’s society.

The Good News of the Kingdom—of Christ and His message—can still bring healing, health and peace. May God give you and yours Easter joy, and zeal to share the Good News we have received as God’s gift!

*Happy Easter!*

*H.E. Terrance Prandergast, SJ*  
Apostolic Administrator