

“HE IS RISEN!”

STICKING WITH THE BASICS IN FAITH

Obviously, I did not have the quality that the purveyors of the survey were seeking. Years ago, while in the college seminary, we were all given a survey put out by a group in Omaha, NE that asked us to respond to any number of questions. It was, as I recall, called the Priest Perceiver Interview, or words to that effect. Frankly, I do not remember too much about it, though I recall that the answers were categorized and collated into several categories, one of which was called “Omni.” If a seminarian scored high in the category *Omni*, it meant that he was able to juggle many and disparate values, keeping them together in a cohesive whole. So far, so good. That is, until we came to the questions. One statement required us to agree or disagree with the following: “If, beyond a shadow of doubt, archaeologists found the bones of Jesus, my faith in the risen Christ would not be shaken” I marked “Disagree.” Wrong answer— at least according to the suspect survey I took.

You see, apparently, the person who possessed the quality of *Omni* would be able to see the reality of Jesus’ resurrection even beyond the limited concepts of bodily resurrection to which we are subject. If that quality made one a better potential future priest, I was convinced I wanted nothing to do with *Omni*! In some respects, that silly survey question was truly a wake-up call to the reality of the Church in the early 1980’s. The belief that we could reconcile finding the bones of Jesus with the traditional concept of resurrection is suspect primarily because we as Catholics hold fast to the bodily resurrection of Jesus. While theologians can argue amongst themselves all day (and often do) with respect to precisely what characterized the resurrected body of Jesus, the historicity of the resurrection cannot be questioned.

Of course, a glorified body is not the same as a resuscitated corpse. Clearly in the Scriptures, Jesus was able to appear, to walk through walls and doors, etc. in the various descriptions of him following the resurrection. Fair enough. But I cannot reconcile with the Christian faith how one could posit that Jesus’ physical body remained on earth following Easter Sunday, much less decaying in the ground. His glorified and risen body cannot be divorced from his physical body completely, even if it took on properties different from the body that walked, ate and slept while on earth. So foundational to our faith is the resurrected body of Jesus, that I could not then, nor could I today, 35 years later, consider this as a viable explanation. As the hit country music refrain noted— “that’s my story and I’m sticking to it!”

Our Catechism teaches: “The Resurrection of Jesus is the crowning truth of our faith in Christ, a faith believed and lived as the central truth by the first Christian community; handed on as fundamental by Tradition; established by the documents of the New Testament; and preached as an essential part of the Paschal mystery along with the cross” (CCC para. #638). And in the very next paragraph, “The mystery of Christ’s resurrection is a real event, with manifestations that were historically verified, as the New Testament bears witness.”

Obviously, this is a matter of faith. An empty tomb itself does not prove anything, as even the Scriptures acknowledge that there could be other logical explanations for the disappearance of the body of Jesus. But our belief in the resurrection is so fundamental, as the Scriptures and the constant tradition of the Church attest, that all other explanations fall short. Again, the Catechism notes: “Given all these testimonies, Christ’s Resurrection cannot be interpreted as something outside the physical order, and it is impossible not to acknowledge it as an historical fact. It is clear from the facts that the disciples’ faith was drastically put to the test by their master’s Passion and death on the cross, which he had foretold” (CCC para. #643).

Today is a day to celebrate the magnificence of the Catholic faith, the indescribable miracle of the resurrection, a belief that can only be accepted in faith, and cannot be scientifically proven. But today is not a day for science; it is a day to rejoice in the sure knowledge that comes with faith in Christ and his promises. He Has Risen. He is not here, and he has conquered sin and death once for all. May you experience the joy of the Risen Lord, not only today, but all throughout these next fifty days of Easter. May we never stop marveling at the miracle of the resurrection, and always seek to implement its saving message in our daily lives.

- When I think of the nearly 50 people killed and 100 injured by ISIS in two Egyptian Coptic churches last Sunday, and that those same faithful Christian families will show up for Easter Sunday Mass today, I am speechless. I am filled with such respect for their heroic witness, and cannot imagine the fear that must

threaten to overcome them, just on the way to morning Mass! For 2000 years, Christians have existed in Egypt, beginning with the flight into Egypt of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

- Yes, yes I am delighted that our Minnesota Twins got off to a promising start in their first week, even if we know it is a very long season. When things go downhill, they often snowball, and a fresh start is just what this team needed. Are we any different in our own lives?
- Next week brings **Divine Mercy Sunday**. See the schedule elsewhere in this bulletin. **Deacon Nick Froehle** will offer a brief reflection as part of the afternoon. He will be ordained to the priesthood next month and we are proud of this Cathedral parishioner for persevering in his path to priesthood.
- We would like to invite you to assist with our annual **Spring Grounds Clean-Up**, sponsored by the Men's Association. It is scheduled for Saturday, May 13 at 9:00 a.m. We will be placing fresh mulch all around the campus. Last fall, we cut down the overgrown bushes, and in short order they will look much cleaner, framing the front of the Cathedral from John Ireland Blvd. Bring a rake and gloves. Refreshments will be provided.
- We have a new clergy resident in the rectory. Hailing from Pittsburgh, PA, about a year ago he was given a new assignment...as the Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis! I am delighted to welcome our chief shepherd, **Archbishop Bernard Hebda** to the rectory. What a blessing it is to have him in our midst, though I hope he does not find me to be too boisterous a neighbor. I'll try to keep the Gregorian Chant to a reasonable decibel level.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. John L. Ubel,

Rector