

**EASTER 2015**  
**SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH**  
**FATHER JOHN ALTBERG**  
**JOHN 20.1**



**EASTER IS THE PERPLEXING APEX OF CHRISTIANITY.** We are able to readily imagine the events leading **TO** Easter...we recreate them liturgically throughout Holy Week...by contrast, **NOTHING** we can experience or re-create matches Easter. Imagine...what we want most and 'know' to be virtually impossible, actually comes true!

Father Gary Caster, author of the Lenten Study book about our patron, Saint Joseph, succinctly states...

*Telling about the resurrection [of Jesus] is only possible for someone who recognizes the resurrection as a REAL event. I consider arguments about whether a man can be raised from the dead to be, in the end, a waste of time. If a virgin and an old lady can have babies, then, [quoting St Luke] "with God nothing will be impossible"*

**THEREFORE, LIKE MARY MAGDALENE, WE WERE UP EARLY THIS MORNING...**emulating her early arrival at the tomb of Jesus. Perhaps the events of Good Friday, replayed in our minds.

We entered a darkened church for the First Mass of Easter. We then, like Mary Magdalene, experienced *LUMEN CHRISTI* – THE LIGHT OF CHRIST...we lighted a fire, the Paschal Candle, the rest of the candles...then the entire church. Symbolizing the return of Jesus from the darkness of Good Friday, OUR personal path from darkness is now illuminated.

Of course, unlike Mary Magdalene, we knew in advance, the events of today. To assume she was 'startled' would be the understatement of history! Her transition from hopelessness to joyous disbelief is instantaneous...she cannot comprehend what she found...**JESUS...ALIVE!**

We can readily relate to and recount the specifics of Holy Week...people in Jerusalem saw them gave eyewitness records. While perhaps the topic of some conversation, the

'Jesus matter' it was likely regarded as an expected execution during Passover. The death of Jesus was, at most, a routine event for the citizens of Jerusalem...it would not have "made the news"...

**THE RESURRECTION...**quite another matter.

Turning to a contemporary Mary...*Mary Flannery O'Connor, wrote commentator George Wiegel, was an exceptionally gifted Catholic writer, who combined remarkable insight into the Creed with deep and unsentimental piety, unblinking realism about the Church vs the soul-withering acids of modern secularism.* In her brief 39 years she created a treasure of commentary about our reality...*O'Connor sensed ours is an age of cynicism – rejection of all religious and moral principles, often in the belief that life is meaningless. She understood the evangelical sterility of the smiley-face, cheap-grace, balloons-and-banners Catholicism that would become rampant shortly after her death.[1964]*

Flannery O'Connor wrote:

*The Virgin Birth, the Incarnation, the Resurrection...are the true laws of human existence. Death, decay, destruction are the suspension of those laws...The Resurrection [Jesus fulfilling his promise to return] seems the high point in the law of nature. [God's offer to redeem all in the world]*

*"Redemption is meaningless [however] unless there is cause for it in the actual life we live, and for the last few centuries there has been operating in our culture the secular belief that there is no such cause."*

*A world indifferent to its need for redemption is not indifferent to the possibility of redemption; it's a world hostile to that possibility. The Church meets this hostility by doubling down on its conviction that the truths it professes are really true, and in fact reveal the deepest truth of the human condition.*

**GO TELL THE OTHERS...**said Jesus to Mary Magdalene. She did. So must we, living a life seeking redemption, and do likewise.

