

Second Sunday of Easter  
Sermon Text: Revelation 1:4-8  
Related Text: Acts 5:27-32  
Date preached: April 11, 2010

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

I must admit that it still causes me to chuckle silently when people old enough to be my grandparents see me in public and say, “Hello Father”. Of course, people see me in my clerics or as Jordan calls them, my Pastor Mark clothes, and they assume I am a Catholic Priest.

That is an easy assumption to make. Pastor, Priest, it’s all the same, right? Well yes in the sense that the Pastor and Priest of a congregation are called to the office of Word and Sacrament. However, in a much less understood yet broad way, pastors and priests are quite different.

In our reading from Revelation we hear this statement. “To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (Rev. 1:5b-6)

This is not solely directed at pastors. This message is to all the baptized. Every baptized person is loved by God, set free from sin by Christ and united into this communion of saints we call a family. In this doing that is totally God's word, we are made priests. People of God, welcome to the priesthood.

In fact, that is what we say at baptism. Much more explicit in the Green Hymnal service of Baptism is the introduction to the welcome which reads, "Through Baptism God has made these new sisters and brothers members of the priesthood we all share in Christ Jesus, that we may proclaim the praise of God and bear his creative and redeeming Word to all the world."

In Holy Baptism we are set free from the power of sin, death and the devil to separate us from God. This gives us the freedom to fully share this good news of Jesus death and resurrection. We live in the freedom of proclaiming what God has done and continues to do.

The key word and function of the priesthood of believers is, proclaim. Too often, we are asked to prove the good news rather than proclaim it. Even in our own minds we are much more comfortable if we

would simply have proof or at the very least, answers to the questions that we might be asked.

That is similar to the dilemma faced by Thomas in the Gospel lesson from John. He hasn't said I don't believe you. I tend to think that Thomas wants to believe; He is simply asking for proof. Let me see for myself, he says. Thomas wants to touch him. He wants the joy of the experience that the others have shared.

I tend to think as well that in this day and age there are people who genuinely want to believe in Christ, but are skeptical of the church. Headlines in the newspapers and on the internet frequently lift up our faults and failings, and the broad strokes of one denomination's faults affect each denomination.

The church then for some become not a place of certainty, but become another place where things are not as certain as we'd like them to be. But in a world where there is so much confusion about what is and is not true, this we know. God's Word is truth.

Jesus is the living Word of God, who was born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered death on the cross for our redemption. His death was the doing of mercy for all

creation. All who believe in Christ receive what he gives, mercy and forgiveness.

Our job is not to save people. Christ has done that. Our job is not to prove it, but to proclaim the good news that Jesus Christ died and rose again. From there we trust in the Holy Spirit to use this witness and foster growth in the life of each person with whom we proclaim good news.

Will we have all the answers for those with whom we share the good news? No. There are the folks like Thomas, Peter, and the other disciples, each with their own flaws whom Christ has called and appointed as disciples. We too fall into that calling. It is the calling of the priesthood of all believers, to bear witness to God and serve as the mouthpiece through whom the Holy Spirit works.

So let this Easter joy ring out. Proclaim the good news, in your words, in your actions, in spite of your doubts and unanswered questions, for this is true.

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He is risen indeed, Alleluia!