

[Gn 1:1-2:2; Ex 14:15-15:1, Is 54:5-14; Rom 6:3-11; Lk: 24:1-12]

Last Thursday evening, we concluded our forty-day journey through Lent. If we were faithful to the discipline of Lent, we are probably a little thinner, a little poorer in the wallet, and a little richer in spirit. As we journeyed through this Holy Week, we were reminded of our connection to that first Holy Week. Tonight we stand at the empty tomb, like a butterfly getting ready to emerge from its cocoon.

We heard the stories of struggle and obstacles. The struggle of creation breaking forth out of nothing; the struggle of an enslaved people given their freedom; the struggle of those who are thirsty for fulfillment and who come to the Lord in their poverty. The struggle of God's Word being sent down from the heavens and not returning until it has achieved its purpose. The struggle of Jesus Himself through the death of sin and decay to the life of Resurrection.

Our catechumen (Cassieann), now called the elect, and our candidates for ongoing conversion (Laura, DuWayne, and Joseph stand at the edge of tomb, ready for transformation. So do all of us.

You see, you and I are spiritual butterflies. Some of us are still nestled safe, secure and small in a cocoon, which may be too hard for us to crack open. There are monsters under our bed, skeletons in our closets and secrets in our hearts that we still have not brought forth and allowed into the light of the Risen Christ. We are afraid, terrified, of some public or private demon, some fear that still terrorizes us. The fear that I will run out of time, that I will never be loved genuinely by anyone, that I will be hurt again, that what I believe and trust most will leave me shattered.

And yet, if we are willing to face our fears -- sometimes with the help of an angel -- we can break the shackles of the fears that enslave us and discover a newness in our lives. We might be like that butterfly -- struggling to find our new selves in Christ, but only with a little "window of opportunity" to help us.

Or, God bless us, we might be that fully-emerging new creation we celebrate tonight. Our "old selves" buried in the waters of baptism and our "new selves" emerging healthy, whole and holy! What a grace that would be!

Once upon a time, a teacher asked her second grade class what each student wanted to be. After all the usual professions were shouted out, little Timmy said, "I want to be possible." The teacher asked, "What do you mean, possible?" And little Timmy responded: "Well, my mom is always telling me that I'm impossible. So when I get big, I want to be possible!"

My friends, Easter is a time of possibilities. In his rising from the dead, Christ enables us to make possible in our own lives all that he taught and lived throughout his brief life among us. The empty tomb is a sign of perfect hope -- that in Christ, all things are possible.

Our story and our lives do not end at the grave, sealed in a tomb blackened by darkness and sin. Our story and our lives continue. We become the angels -- the messengers -- of the Resurrection in every act of kindness, compassion and forgiveness extended to us and which we, in turn, extend to others.

The fluid of Christ's Body and Blood, which we receive in this Eucharist, gives strength to our wings and enables us to soar to new heights. The power of the Holy Spirit outpoured in the Sacrament of

Confirmation gives us the wisdom, the courage, the right judgment and the holiness to walk with angels. The best is yet to be!

It is all here – the promises of God and the legacy of hope even as we live in a world often seemingly without hope. So many stories. So many flourishes of promise. So many anxious hearts waiting to hear Good News.

The Risen Jesus quiets those fears. Darkness yields to dawn. Now there is life where there was death. It's all about the goodness of being re-born into a new creation through water, and of being anointed and confirmed in the faith by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. We peer into the tomb to find only wrapping clothes. Shrouds, once symbols of death, now laid carefully aside, become new symbols of life. You, dear elect and candidates, do not run away from what is given to you tonight!

Walk out of your cave, stretch out your tired and weakened spiritual muscles and take a deep breath of fresh Holy Spirit air. There IS reason to hope and to celebrate a Happy Easter! THAT is worth celebrating and calling it Resurrection Sunday. And then, healed, raised and cleaned off, we can become the Divine Word News Service, and share that Good News with those who need to hear it. "Tell us, what did you see?" "Let me tell you!"

We pray this evening for your prayers so that they may be the catalyst for those here present who are still stuck in their tombs. We pray that one day all of us can move from the darkness of death and the tomb into the Easter light of Resurrection glory and new life. Let us make our prayer the one from the book "Rediscover Jesus" and

pray that we may experience in all ways and always, the beautiful and transforming gift of God's beautiful mercy:

Loving Father, here I am.

I trust that You have an incredible plan for me.

Transform me. Transform my life. Everything is on the table.

Take what You want to take and give what you want to give.

Transform me into the person You created me to be,

I hold nothing back; I am 100 percent available.

How can I help?

Alleluia! And AMEN!