

Companions on the Journey

April 12, 2020

Dear friends,

He is risen! As he said he would do. He is risen from the grave. I would love to have been there. I have been to the tomb of Jesus many times over the past forty years. I have a sense of it and of what it was when they buried him there. When they placed his body there, in that linen shroud, and rolled the sealing stone into place—what happened in there?

My imagination has worked on that question for many years. I have on occasion thought that the Father sent angels (how would you like to have been picked to be on that detail?) to clean the fallen and pierced body of the Incarnate Son of God. They would clean and wash and anoint with the gentlest of fragrances. There would have been such care, such attention to detail. He whom the Father sent and who paid little attention to his own needs or comfort or wounds, is ministered to in a complete and perfect way. Then the Father's Spirit, in a nanosecond, transforms the dead Jesus into the risen Jesus and the shroud simply collapses upon itself in that light burst while retaining only the slightest imprint of the moment of resurrection.

Those angels would have brought him clothes to wear. I would like to have seen them. And the impact of resurrection after such a horrific death, what must that have been like. Jesus' mother, at the moment of the annunciation with the archangel Gabriel listens and accepts all that is said and then responds: "I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say." Like mother; like Son. Jesus is lying in that tomb. "Let it be done unto me as you say, Father." And so it is. Jesus is raised up. Transformed. His person, including his body, is fully and completely transformed. That is what the grace of God does. That is what the Lord Jesus has unleashed into this world. That is the transforming power of the Holy Spirit poured forth into each of us in Baptism and strengthened in Confirmation.

That is what Jesus has accomplished. That is not only what Jesus has done. That is who Jesus is. In his own words, "I am the resurrection!" "I am life." And we who believe know that what we need more than anything is to be lifted up, out of the mess of this world, and given a second chance, a new beginning. That is what Jesus does. That is why Jesus came. That is what Jesus has accomplished. That is what it means for you and me to believe in the resurrection of the body. You and I are going to have a body forever. We have one now but we are going to have a body forever, transformed. Made new. But whether we are raised up to live in glory or raised up to be condemned to our own selfishness depends on the decisions we make right now.

My friends, there is something very significant going on right now. We can sleepwalk through it and complain until it passes and we simply try to return to what was. OR... We let the Lord shine his light on those areas of our life where we have abandoned his way. We ask for pardon. We recognize our need for forgiveness. We turn to the Jesus who was crucified for us and we ask him to be merciful and we ask him to transform our lives. Our call. But everybody will have to weigh in—pro or con. Let us believe and choose the path of life.

Peace,

Msgr. McHenry