

Alleluia! Jesus passes from this life to the fullness of divine life. Death is not the end. Alleluia also, because Easter celebrates the passage of Christians from the life of this world to the life lived in the light of the risen Jesus. Life as we know it is only the beginning of Life. Today we celebrate what the pressures of this world make people forget: the inherent goodness of life itself—the joy of being human, the glory of God among us.

Easter is not a future hope to reflect upon; the Resurrection is a way of living now. Resurrection is life, the way to live with God and each other and all of creation. Resurrection is the everyday ground of our existence. Some days, the ground shakes and shifts but this reality does not have to shake our faith. The lay of the land changes. Everything changes. To look at it positively, thanks to change, everything is possible. True, too many possibilities is an onslaught, so we try to create a sense of self-assurance amidst change, some way of “*being* in control”. However, we were not created for being in control; rather we are made for “*becoming* the Body of Christ.” That’s Resurrection. Resurrection happens in and through our bodily contact with the Risen Christ day by day, and Christ is all around. We meet Christ in each other, though our daily pace might not allow us ample time and space for this meeting. So on this Easter Day, let us consider the fact that if we want to see a Resurrection appearance, then we need to practice our

capacity for becoming an experience of Resurrection. We need to exercise our Resurrection bodies. We begin to embody Jesus by walking in Christ's way, talking about Christ's truth, and living lives of peace and joy.

You can become a Resurrection Body. Rise up: Get out of yourself, go out beyond yourself, and look deeply at things with the eyes of Christ—approaching others; drawing near enough to touch them deeply. On earth, in his body, Jesus moved amongst the people. He touched them, embraced them, and looked right into their eyes, got close enough to feel the longing of their hearts. Through, with and in his body, he brought joy, happiness and healing to others with the weaving, connective energy of the Holy Spirit. That is why Mary was so grief-stricken by his death and so amazed when she is called by name and recognizes Jesus. He is really present; it nearly knocks her over and the impact will go on to make an amazing difference in her life. At the same time, though, having met the Christ, she wants to hold on to him and not lose him again. Understandable. But Jesus, in saying “Don't hold me!” is cautioning her and us: If you meet the Christ in a garden, do not linger there long. You can get trapped in trying to contain the Risen Lord in the moment. You can get caught there, wanting to stay there. However, meeting the Risen Christ touches us in life changing ways so that we can become Resurrection bodies approaching others and calling them by name, nourishing the Christ in each other such that together we grow more into the Body of Christ.

Our times are confusing and troubling. So many young people are homeless, not just the marginalized and victimized but the young women and men who we esteem as privileged and claim as the hope of our tomorrow. These young people are being groomed for achievement and success, schooled in many sources of information and areas of knowledge. But knowledge is not the same thing as understanding. Our children, teens and young adults need to be mentored in understanding how to receive and give gifts—understanding that Christ’s offer and our gracious receiving of the gift of his life, the free gift which we do not have to deserve, is the heart of all meaning, the source of all joy and happiness. In our competitive and too often cut-throat world, with fawned upon winners and disparaged losers, where the specter of failure is the palpable prod to cramming and working round the clock, young people need to understand that the best workplace is the sacramental space between people experiencing Resurrection.

There are lots of wandering, hungry souls out there who want the beautiful and the good and the true. But they are scared and detached. Their bodies suffer a kind of oxygen depletion because they are closing themselves off for protection in a land we are in danger of becoming a nation of Judases, betraying each other, so quick to criticize and find fault, that our common spaces, far from being sacramental places of offering and receiving, are becoming inhospitable,

uninhabitable zones of hate, anger and despair. No wonder we retreat and become detached from each other, rather than stepping in to make a difference.

What would Jesus do? He is already doing it. He is loving, healing, forgiving, and teaching. If you want to see him, then look in between both sides in our culture wars, because he does not take sides but calls all people brothers and sisters. He does not recognize the labels conservative and liberal, or traditional and progressive. Rather, Christ is looking for people to become the arms, legs and feet, the hearts and hands and voices of his Body. He tells parables cautioning people of faith not to confuse the cross and the flag, heaven and nation. He challenges churches that point to their long apostolic tradition, but are watching their numbers dwindle, to spend less time on budget sheets, more in the pages of scripture and booking face time with the very people who need befriending. On the hot button issues of the day, Jesus does not take sides; he takes bread, blesses, breaks and shares it, inviting us all around the table, calling each one of us by name, so that we can stop the name-calling and address each other with familiarity and understanding. When you hear your name, when you call another by his or her name, that means bodies are getting close enough so that they can become Resurrection bodies.

Let's not play pretend. It is easy to lose heart. The Resurrection Body exercises that are supposed to help us approach each other might seem like they are

not doing anything, at first. However, anything good needs time to ripen. Besides, it can take awhile for people to trust what they see—that the Risen Christ is ever-present in our midst: Christ on his knees at the Last Supper, offering peace and calling us to reach out to people in need. Christ on the Cross, offering forgiveness, beseeching us to call on God when we are in need. Christ from beyond the grave, yet very here and now, calling us each by name, offering the divine gift of compassionate love and understanding which we can receive and offer to others.

This kind of living, Resurrection living, takes practice—the practice of offering and receiving gifts, extending yourself into the sacramental space between people, through, with and in the body, your body. Your body—you: You can become a Resurrection appearance. Alleluia.