

## Fr. Paw's Easter Message, 2022

“On the first day of the week Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb.” (John 20:1)

The gospel of St. John describes the first Easter morning. Mary Magdalene visits the tomb of Jesus and sees the stone has been removed. She runs to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him.”

I greet you with the good news of the resurrected Christ and wish you a blessed Easter Season. It is so fitting this year with the renovation of our sanctuary. The mosaic shows Mary Magdalene standing to the right of Jesus holding a scroll which declares that “Christ Is Risen.”

As I have mentioned to you before, the theology of the mosaic is taken from John's Gospel. Christians in the east give Mary Magdalene the title of “Apostle of the Apostles.” She was the first to witness the empty tomb and the risen Christ in the garden, and she announced to Peter and the other apostles, “I have seen the Lord!”

Mary Magdalene, as you know, was the beloved disciple who supported Jesus during his ministry and stood at the foot of the cross while the apostles ran away. She represents many men and women who serve Christ quietly with time, talent, and treasure, as we do today.

We are all invited to do that through the sacrament of Baptism. If you see that you are not doing so, today is the day to begin. Even more than in past Easter seasons, we have reason to rejoice because we now have such a beautiful mosaic, thanks to you and to Karen Stokx, whose generous donation was made in the quiet manner of Mary Magdalene. You made your own donations quietly and despite the hardship of the pandemic.

We thank God for the opportunity to worship Him within this lovely, inspiring mosaic, surrounded by the angels, saints and the heavenly realm. May we who experience the quiet majesty of this liturgy be inspired to witness the risen Christ in our words and deeds.

In the first reading, from the Acts of the Apostles, we see “what has happened all over Judea” and that “we are all witnesses.” ( Acts 10:34a, 37-43)

Faith is never private property; it is always to be shared. And when we do that with our words and deeds our faith grows like the mustard seed into a mighty oak tree providing shade and rest to travelers.

In our parish the St. Vincent de Paul Society does its work quietly, providing help to the poor. The clergy reaches out to the sick and homebound. Faith Formation – within our school, for non-school families, and for adults – prepares candidates for First Reconciliation, Holy Communion, and Confirmation. Musicians, singers, lectors, and all who participate in different liturgies, whether during the week or on weekends: all give witness to Christ in their words and deeds.

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I am reminded again of the first reading, when St. Peter said Christ commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead.

From Colossians, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God." (Col 3:1-4) When we gaze at our beautiful mosaic it reminds us of this scripture.

When we do so, witnessing in our daily lives all the "quiet service", we are all pilgrims on a journey from this earthly life to the life of heaven. It is then we want to join our loved ones who have come before us: the saints and the heavenly hosts, most importantly God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I greet you with the ancient greeting, "*Christ Is risen from the dead, truly He is risen.*"

-Fr. Paw