

“Believe the Good News”

Luke 24:1-12

Christ is risen!! He is risen indeed!! Alleluia!!

With the fire at Notre Dame Cathedral dominating the news since Monday, it is hard to imagine that a more newsworthy church-related topic could make the rounds. However, there is a more church-related newsworthy topic this morning. Christ is risen!! The Son of God bore the sin of the whole world, and suffered death, even death on a cross. And now, Christ is risen!!

If Christ did not rise from the dead, then that Cathedral in Paris was just another old building. As someone who has visited Notre Dame, I assure you that calling that church “just another old building” would be utter nonsense.

The funny thing is that my comparison of what is truly the most newsworthy event would seem like nonsense to the world around us. Jesus of Nazareth rising from the dead has been the most significant, newsworthy event (church-related or not) for the past couple thousand years. It was so newsworthy that, within a matter of a few months, thousands of Jews quit worshipping as Jews, became faithful to Christ and His Church, and rested their hope on the resurrection. Because there was now this empty tomb in

Jerusalem.

On the day of Easter, it took the Eleven remaining disciples a little bit of time for the news to sink in. Even though they had heard the words of Christ, had witnessed or heard about all of His miraculous signs. They had heard Him predict on numerous occasions that the Christ had to be lifted up on the cross, but in three days would rise from the dead. Nevertheless, the disciples dismissed these women and their news of the resurrection.

The disciples had a profound lack of understanding in regard to the Lord's Passion: His suffering and death; and their disbelief of the resurrection was equally great. The news of Christ's death did not make sense – it wasn't supposed to be this way. Great leaders don't surrender, stand silent before their accusers, and get executed. The news of His resurrection made even less sense. Dead men don't get up and walk. But what about Lazarus? What about Jairus' daughter and the boy at Nain? With Jesus, the dead do rise from the grave. And those 11 disciples should now be living witnesses that Jesus has power over death.

The same blindness that plagued the disciples on that first Easter morning has permeated the hearts and minds of mankind ever since. The world has either ignored or dismissed this wonderful Good News of Christ's sacrifice to pay the ransom price for the sins of the world and His subsequent resurrection from the dead, ensuring God's faithful that just as He is risen from the dead, so shall we rise to live with Him through all eternity. The world and our sinful nature says: "It's nonsense;" "It's unbelievable;" "It's a myth; an idle tale." Our sensibilities tell us that if something seems too good

to be true, then it probably is too good to be true.

But God does not operate within the limitations of the reason and rationale of our feeble minds. In the beginning, God created a world in which perfect goodness and perfect truth were not only possible, but they were the intended reality of God's creating Word.

Of course, God's creation was spoiled by God's created son Adam and was turned from perfect goodness to total corruption. To fix the problems that ail the world, God promised to send His only-begotten Son. However, the vast majority of Adam's descendants did not believe the witness of Scripture. And they went their own way.

Christ was born of a virgin in Bethlehem, just as the prophets had foretold, but even most of the so-called "faithful" children of Israel had long since dismissed the actual testimony of God's Word, such as the words of the prophet Isaiah who foretold that the virgin will be with child and that child would grow to be the Suffering Servant who "would be pierced for our transgressions and wounded for our iniquity."

When Jesus came preaching, teaching, and performing miracles, some asked: "Could this be the Christ?" But on second thought, "No, He doesn't seem to be the kind of Messiah we are looking for."

We are now living in the final age. Christ has promised that He will return and all the faithful will join Him in His kingdom which has no end. Heaven and earth shall pass away, and a new heaven and a new earth will last for all eternity. How many people in our lives have dismissed these promises of God as being little more than a fairy tale which is "too good to be

true”?

Like those women at the tomb on Easter morning, we have been presented with the greatest of all news: Christ is risen!! He is risen indeed!! Alleluia!!

The Good News for us is that the Good News brought to the disciples by the women who witnessed the empty tomb on that first Easter morning; the Good News for us is that the news of the empty tomb is just as newsworthy today as it was on that first Easter morning. Your sins are just as forgiven as the women who found the empty tomb.

Such is the significance of this one event which ties together all of history. From Adam, to whom that first promise of the Messiah was made, all the way to the last generation of the faithful who will one day witness the coming of our Lord – we are all drawn to the words of Scripture which have been and remain the testimony of the witnesses which brings Good News.

Easter is a day filled with Good News of what God has done for His children and a real reason to hope. Christ offering Himself as the final sacrifice on the altar of the cross perfectly displayed God’s character. In Christ rising from the dead and thereby fulfilling all of God’s promises made throughout the ages and all of His promises made to His disciples, He is revealed as the Author of salvation and the ultimate bringer of Good News. There is only one bit of news that matters today: Christ is risen!! He is risen indeed!! Alleluia!! Amen.