

REFLECTION FOR THE EASTER VIGIL IN THE HOLY NIGHT 2021

Mark 16:9-15

1st December that was the date I was supposed to be born. So, my parents were excited as they got things ready for the arrival of their first child.

1st December came... and went. 5th December came, and went. 10th December came and went. 15th December came and went.

Finally, on 16th December, my mother went into labour in Hospital. And she was in labour for 10 hours.

My dad had travelled at that time so he could not be there for my birth. My mum's parents have been there all day long and got tired, so they went home. So, my mother was all alone at the hospital in the middle of 10 hours of labour.

Well, after 10 hours of labour, I was born. Their first child. I weigh 10 pounds 6 ounces. My mother never spoke to me after that hahaha.

My mum told me that childbirth was the most frightening and painful thing she ever experienced. And yet she told me that she was so so happy.

My Granddad came to see me few hours after I was born. He took a long look at me, and said, "well, maybe he'll get cuter."

My grandma also arrived. I was her first grandchild. She looked at me and declared, "He is the most handsome child ever born." I always trusted my grandma's opinion more!

Isn't it interesting? My grandparents, the two of them can look at the same baby, and draw very different conclusions? Two people can watch the same movie, look at the same piece of art, view the same situation, and see it in very different ways.

It's all a matter of perspective. Our perspective is shaped by who we are, how we grew up, what our life experience has been. And sometimes our perspective changes radically because of a life changing event.

The men and women who first followed Jesus most of them were Jewish, and some were more educated than others. Some were fishermen, carpenters, political activists, and even government employees. They each had their perspective on life.

The more they followed Jesus, the more they listened to him, they started to see themselves and each other differently. They started to see the future differently – they saw a future full of hope.

And then... Jesus was arrested, beaten, crucified, and sealed up in a tomb.

Mark tells us that, early on that Sunday morning, Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James, and Salome saw the Risen Lord. And in that moment, their perspective was changed forever. Death has been conquered. Jesus is risen.

Easter changed them. They were weeping, sad, unable to believe that hope was possible. Yet Christ changes them, changes their perspective. Life conquers death!

We can look at every cross we have to carry, and we can say to that cross, “yes, you’re heavy. But the Risen Lord is going to make us strong enough to deal with you.”

We can look at every moment of suffering, and we can say, “yes, this pain is real, but the Risen Lord is going to make us whole.”

We can look at everything that tries to bind us, everything that tries to rob our freedom and take our hope away...

we can look at the pandemic, an economic struggle, an unprecedented time in our life, and we can say: “Yes, you’re big and scary, but our God is bigger.”

We can look at our loved one’s tomb, we can look at our children’s tomb, and we can say to Death, “Yes, you’re real. And some days it looks like you win. But 2000 years ago everyone thought you had won too. Yet Mary Magdalene and the other women saw something on Easter morning that changes everything. they saw that Death doesn’t get the last word, Life does.”

When we talk about perspective, we oversimplified it and ask, “Is the glass half-full or half-empty?”

But for Christians, the Easter perspective is this: the tomb is fully empty, so the cup of life is fully full! The tomb is fully empty – so my heart is full of hope.

The Easter message is that nothing on earth could defeat Christ, not even the tomb of death could hold Christ. We too can look at every part of our lives that feels lifeless and believe that the Risen Lord is with us. And if the tomb couldn’t hold Christ, then nothing on earth can hold us, not even the tomb of death can hold us because our redeemer lives, and you too will live.

Fr Patrick