

My Lord and My God

Bishop Timothy L. Doherty's Easter 2018 Message

Notice how news reports catch our attention.

Wars, storms and droughts affect millions of people. But stories about individuals capture our attention: one family fleeing a war, one woman who protected her children from falling tornado debris, one rancher selling thirsty live-stock for lack of feed. The singular human experience draws our curiosity and empathy.

The Easter Gospel is about Jesus' resurrection from the truly dead. The New Testament initially contains no grand announcement or celebration. The early news is carried by individuals, by singular persons. The experience of seeing and talking to Jesus risen begins as "my Lord" is alive as it moved to "our Lord" and on to us.

This means that Easter, to be real, is more than a calendar date. For Catholic Christians, it is a moment to experience our Easter and my Lord — as the Apostle Thomas exclaimed "my Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

The Easter season continues through Pentecost Sunday on May 20.

The whole Church revisits the Bible readings daily to retell the encounters with the risen Lord, like a family retelling stories of its own history.

Easter is a presence just like the sacraments are a real presence of Christ. The retelling of events and Easter greetings in various languages remind us that Christ is acting on our behalf here and now.

Just as the Church will take some weeks to relive a story that needs more than a single day, you will find yourself in the same position. Call to mind your own experience of looking for Jesus as did those women and men at the first Easter. Then as now, it took days for some to realize what — or who — they had seen and experienced.

Comparing their experiences of the Risen Lord helped people to know that the power of God is no illusion, and that it could be real for each one in somewhat different ways.

Ask yourself, "When have I noticed God's presence and the light of Christ's resurrection?"
"What did I learn from others' stories of unbidden grace?"

Apart from your awe and gratitude for God's touching your awareness, how does God intend for you to live out that moment that God opened to you in an event, a sound, another person's voice?

I am guessing that the Apostle Thomas' exclamation, "My Lord and my God," rushed from his lips because he realized that the rest of his life would be a response to these questions. May our responses also translate into the manner of our lives.

Prayerful best wishes to you and all as we set out to live the Easter message.