Alleluia!

Have you ever wondered what that word means exactly? It comes from a Hebrew word that means “praise the Lord,” though our Christian tradition hasn’t exactly translated it, leaving instead the sound that lies behind the Hebrew word for praise; the sound of cheering or noise if you will. It’s an expression of joy that we say before every Gospel proclamation, except during the season of Lent which we have just concluded.

It’s good to hear it again but we also should live it out.

This gets back at to one of the things that I love the most about our Catholic faith, which is the fact that everything we do, we do for a reason. The Alleluia is our proclamation of joy; joy for what God has done for us, and joy that our Lord is risen. The question though, is what does that exactly mean for us?

Ideally, it’s summarized in our second reading for Easter Sunday where in Colossians 3:2, Saint Paul says to “think of what is above.”

That means seeking higher things; seeking to be with God; trying to find God in our lives. Being an Easter People.

Doing this though requires understanding. It takes time for Saint Mary of Magdala to understand Jesus has arisen, as it does for Peter and the apostles, and the other followers of Jesus. But they all come to understand.

We hear that word “understand” in the Gospel, that they do not yet fully understand the resurrection yet (John 20:9). Just like the first apostles to arrive at the tomb, sometimes we cannot understand. We arrive to celebrate the Easter event every time we celebrate Mass; but sometimes we don’t understand what it means. We don’t get that we are to grow in a relationship with God. We don’t get that when we receive Communion we are to become gradually more like Jesus, and change for the better loving one another. Or we don’t get that Mass really matters. The danger is this can become just a reminder of something that happened a long time ago, so onto the Easter bunny and the ham dinner.

Easter though changes everything. It changes the meaning of death, in that we are redeemed by what Jesus did for us. It gives us hope for the future. In Easter, we are reminded how much God loved us by sending His only Son, who died and was buried in a tomb that could not hold Him, that was empty on the Third Day.

All this matters, but does it matter to you and me? How do we encounter the Risen Christ? Do we understand how special we are, how God created us as unique in all of creation?

As you celebrate Easter, my hope is that you will use this wonderful day as a moment to reinvigorate your faith. To know what it means to be loved by God and to experience

that love by coming to Mass, by being a person of prayer, by knowing God is journeying with you throughout life, and to do as the apostles did, and proclaim through your words and actions this God who is love.

Easter blessings to you and your family. While some of you may spend time after Mass trying to find a basket, hopefully we all spend our lives trying to find God who fills not the empty tomb, but our souls, which can be seemingly empty at times, with His love and grace. Open your eyes to see this love, to understand it, and to proclaim it, walking with the Risen Lord every day.

Alleluia, He is Risen!

Fr. Paul