

**RESURRECTION IS NOT ESCAPE.
RESURRECTION IS A CALL TO RISE AND RESPOND.**

Jeremiah 31:1–6, Acts of the Apostles 10:34–43, Gospel of John 20:1–18

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Mary Magdalene came to the tomb while it was still dark. That detail matters, because resurrection did not begin in brightness. It began in darkness, in confusion, in uncertainty. And I think that is where many of us are as a community today. Not because we are gone, not because we are broken, but because we are facing questions we have not yet fully faced together. We are still here. We are still a community. But perhaps not all of us are yet fully aware of what this moment is asking from us.

Mary did not arrive with clarity. She arrived with grief. And yet she stayed. She did not turn away from what she did not understand. She stood there, she wept, she looked again. And because she stayed, she encountered the risen Christ. That is the first message of Easter for us. Stay. Do not distance yourself from what is difficult. Because sometimes, what we avoid is exactly where Christ is waiting to meet us.

In the prophet Jeremiah, we hear this promise: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.” These words were spoken in a time of uncertainty, when people were unsure of their future. And yet God’s love was already present, even before things were resolved. Which means that for us, uncertainty is not a sign that God is absent. It may be the very place where we are invited to pay attention, to listen more deeply, to become more aware of what truly matters.

And perhaps this is where we are now. Not a community that needs to be built from nothing, but a community that is being called to wake up more fully to itself. To recognize what we have. To recognize what is needed. To recognize that the life of this chaplaincy does not rest on a few, but on all of us.

Our challenge is not that we do not exist. Our challenge is whether we will take responsibility for what already exists.

Because commitment is not just about being present. It is about saying, “This matters to me.” It is about moving from attendance to ownership. From being part of the community in name, to being part of its life in action.

Resurrection is not passive. It is participatory. It invites us not only to believe that something good can happen, but to take part in making it happen.

In Acts, Peter says, “We are witnesses.” Not spectators. Not people who stand at a distance. Witnesses. People who are involved, who take part, who carry the story forward. Easter is not something we observe once a year. It is something we live into, day by day.

If Christ is risen, then the Church must also rise. And that rising is not only spiritual. It becomes visible. Alive in service, where we begin to ask, “Where can I help?” Alive in generosity, where we begin to ask, “What can I share?” Alive in responsibility, where we begin to say, “This is also mine.”

And this is important. Because sometimes, people do not respond, not because they do not care, but because they do not see. They do not yet see the need, or they do not yet realize that they are needed. And so part of our calling as a community is also to open that awareness, gently but clearly, that this chaplaincy depends on all of us.

Mary Magdalene did not remain at the tomb. After encountering Jesus, she was sent. “Go to my brothers,” Jesus said. And she went and announced, “I have seen the Lord.” That is the movement of Easter: from confusion to encounter to mission. And that is our movement too. Not to remain uncertain, but to begin responding. Not all at once, not perfectly, but intentionally.

Because this is not just a place we attend. This is a community we share responsibility for.

So today, Easter asks us not only to believe, but to become more aware, more present, more engaged. To rise in faith, yes, but also to rise in commitment. To rise in generosity. To rise in responsibility. To rise together, not as spectators, but as participants in the life God has already given us.

Because resurrection is not only what God does for us. It is what God awakens within us.

Christ is risen... and so are we. Amen.