

**HOMILY EASTER**  
**April 20, 2025**

When I am down and, oh my soul so weary;  
When troubles come and my heart burdened be;  
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence,  
Until you come and sit a while with me.

You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains  
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas  
And I am strong when I am on your shoulders  
You raise me up...to more than I can be

How did we get to where we are in this country, in our world today? All of the divisiveness, the hatred, the fear, the violence, the abuse, the destruction, the disregard for human life? I don't think any of us wants this. We need Jesus to raise us up more than ever. So where is God in all of this? God created us in his own image as human beings. It is essential to our human nature to have a free will. Without it, we would be kind of like a tree. God allows us to exercise our free will and most of the negativity that we encounter in the world today is caused by human beings exercising their free will. I have come to believe that Jesus works through all of that in subtle ways that I do not always understand because he loves us unconditionally. It is hard to see looking forward because we cannot see the future, but we can see how God helped us in the past to get through things that seemed overwhelming at the time. As he did in the past, he will help us today. Today we celebrate the Resurrection. Do you really believe that Jesus is risen and with us today? A couple of years ago a young man came up to me after Mass and said "Fr. Jim, you talk about Jesus as though he were alive today." I was kind of taken back by that and was not sure how to respond other than, "I believe he is." The Resurrection is not something to be proven. There were no witnesses. The Resurrection is something to be experienced.

In the Gospel reading we have an account of that first Easter morning. The women who went to the tomb in the morning to anoint Jesus were worried about who was going to roll the stone away for them,

but they saw that the stone was removed from the tomb. They also found the tomb empty, no body. They ran to the upper room to report what they had seen, to get help figuring it out. They did not have it all figured out that morning. But they stayed together as a group. They experienced the post Resurrection appearances. They were empowered by the Holy Spirit to accomplish great things. While Jesus walked the earth, they did not do much other than follow Jesus. After the Resurrection, they spread the Gospel to the whole earth. They experienced the Resurrection.

Just as the early disciple's faith in the Resurrection developed over time within a faith community, our faith develops in the same way. The spiritual journey takes a lifetime and I do not think we can do it alone. If you are interested in soccer, you can kick a soccer ball around in your back yard yourself or maybe even watch a few games on TV, but if you really want to experience soccer you need to join a team and you need to play. Organized religion has received a bad name in recent years but it is the best we have. The Catholic Church is not perfect, there is a human face to the Church and sometimes we get off track, but I am happy to be part of a Church that has existed for 2,000 years with billions and billions of members and believers during that time. I believe the Church has something to give us.

Are you happy with our world the way it exists today? Are you contributing to making the world a better place? Are you happy with your life? If you do what you have always done you will get what you have always gotten. Maybe it is time to make some changes. If you find yourself just digging yourself into a hole, stop digging. Sometimes we need to just laugh at the mess and climb out of the hole. Maybe you need to spend more time in silence until Jesus comes and sits with you and guides you. With all of the business and distractions in the world there is value in coming together as a faith community every weekend and try to figure things out together. Our St. Edith Community is not perfect but we will do our best to welcome you just the way you are and walk the spiritual journey with you. I think we can make the world a better place, together.