

EASTER SUNDAY 2023

I have only one simple thing to say to you this morning: It is time for you to go! I mean that in the best possible way.

Jesus is risen and there is no time to waste. This is the sense you get from the Gospel. You cannot keep the good news to yourself. These words from the Aparecida documents says exactly what is necessary:

“Knowing Jesus is the best gift that any person can receive; that we have encountered Him is the best thing that has happened in our lives and making him known by our word and deeds is our joy.”

Is there anymore that needs to be said? I mentioned yesterday evening the Resurrection is not simply about Jesus coming to life from death, nor the promise that we too will rise with him in glory. All this is true. But the resurrection is a summons to take seriously our share in the recreation of the world. Because of our baptism we share in that task of evangelisation. We are called to ‘sanctify’ or as some put it to ‘christify’ the world. To bring Christ into every situation we find ourselves: our marriage, our workplace, our extended family, our friends, our neighbourhood. Wherever we find ourselves we bring Christ.

Mission is not what we do, it is not so much what we say, it is who we are. To be a Christian is to have been sent out – to be a witness- a living gospel. This is what Peter is saying in that first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, we are witnesses to what Jesus did and spoke, what we have seen and experienced. And we can do this because as Paul wrote in Colossians, *‘our life is hidden with Christ in God.’*

Never forget that you may be the only Gospel that people will encounter and so they need to read, hear and see Christ, in your smile, in your willingness to listen, in your thoughtful response and in your gentle challenge. I was deeply impressed recently when I met someone in the hospital while waiting for an appointment. He shared with me that he was in a difficult job which often required him to tell lies, or certainly distort the truth. He found this difficult to square with his faith so he was going to have a word with his line manager and so he asked for prayers. As it happened, we found ourselves in the same waiting room some weeks afterwards and I asked how the conversation with his line manager had gone. “Well, not too well actually I must attend a disciplinary hearing. But, I don’t mind, I would rather lose my job than sell my faith short.”

It is time for you to go. But what are you taking away from this experience. What are you going to tell people about your experience here? There is a beautiful incident in the Gospels, it comes in Mark Chapter 5, the deliverance of the demoniac. Do you remember what happens once the man is set free. He wants to follow Jesus, but Jesus says to him, *“Go home to your family and friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you.”*

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It is time for you to go and tell others what Jesus has done for you – to announce that He is risen and that His presence in your life makes all the difference. We do not believe in an idea, little less an ideal, we believe in a person who said *I am with you always*. Our life is hidden with Christ in God. Paul and Lucy Irven will witness to that today. Yesterday we had the living witness of four

candidates who wished to become Oblates. Today Lucy and Paul make their oblation – their offering. They will declare that like the monastic community they desire to prefer nothing whatever to Christ. They will join with us in praying for our world and they will each day find time to read the Word of God as a Word of life. They want to be holy so that they can bring the holiness of God into their daily encounters.

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Our nation needs to hear again the good news that Jesus lives. We must stop apologising for believing in Christ and reveal that because of him we are different. Our society needs to be reminded that care for those who are weak, those who are poor, the dignity of migrants and all human rights come from the heart and teaching of Jesus, not from some secular, woke philosophy. We need to be agents of transformation and enthusiastic disciples of the risen Lord. Go home, go and tell people what Jesus has done for you. Go back to your parishes and become even more involved. He is waiting for you, he wants your hands, your eyes, your mouth, your heart. He wants you to be another incarnation of his risen love.

It's time for you to go!

Abbot Robert Igo, OSB

9 April 2023