

The message of Easter is that Jesus is alive and risen and at work in our lives.

In a hot summer afternoon a man was drifting in a canoe on a lake. He looked down to the lake. There a bunch of water beetles were at play. Suddenly one of the beetles began to crawl up the side of the canoe. When it got halfway up, it attached the nails of its legs to the wooden side of the canoe and died. The man watched it reading his book. About three hours later, he looked down at the dead beetle again. What he saw amazed him. The beetle had dried up, and its back was starting to crack open. As he watched, something begins to emerge from the opening: first a moist head, then wings. It was a beautiful dragonfly. He sat there in awe. Then the dragonfly began to move its wings. It hovered gracefully over the water where the other beetles were at play. But they didn't recognize the dragonfly. They didn't realize that it was the same beetle they had played with three hours earlier. The man with his finger nudged the dried-out shell of the beetle. It was like an empty tomb.

We all recognize the parallel between the water beetle and Jesus.

Jesus died nailed to a cross. The water beetle died fastened to the canoe. Jesus underwent an amazing transformation three days after his death.

The water beetle went through a similar change three hours after its death. Jesus wasn't recognized by those who had been with him three days earlier. The beetle wasn't recognized by those that had been with it three hours earlier. The risen body of Jesus had new powers to move about. The beetle could now fly and no longer had to crawl about. The story of the water beetle may help us understand better what happened to Jesus on Easter morning.

The body of Jesus that rose on Easter morning was totally different from the body of Jesus that was buried on Good Friday afternoon. It was not a resuscitated body, that is, a body restored to its original life—like Lazarus, or the son of the widow of Naim, or the daughter of Jairus. Rather, it was a body that had taken a quantum leap forward into an infinitely higher life. It was a glorified body. It was totally living and totally life-giving.

Paul compares the body before resurrection to a seed, and the body after resurrection to the plant that emerges from that seed. He says in his First Letter to the Corinthians: "What you plant is a bare seed . . . not the full-bodied plant. . . . When the body is buried, it is mortal; when raised, it will be immortal. When buried, it is ugly and weak; when raised, it will be beautiful and strong. When buried, it is a physical body; when raised, it will be a spiritual body." *1 Corinthians 15:37, 42-44*

The virtuous women who came to anoint the body of Jesus were conscious of negative powers and their limitations.. They knew they could not access the body of Christ because of the huge stone at the entrance. Their question was "who will roll back the stone for us to go inside the tomb?" They were afraid but determined. But on reaching there, the stone had already been rolled back and they entered the tomb to be told by an angel that the power of resurrection has occurred.

Beloved brethren, tonight, we ponder on the power of resurrection, tonight, we ask ourselves who will roll back this stone of suffering, death, hunger, poverty, terrorism, war, ignorance, disease, etc, troubling the world? It is still this power of resurrection. No matter what your stone is, the power of resurrection can roll it back. Let us be determined just like these women were, to do the good we ought to do, according to our means and strength. Whatever preventive stone we may encounter, the power of resurrection is there to roll it back for us.

Each time we love again after having our love rejected, we share in the power of the resurrection. Each time we trust again after having our trust betrayed, we share in the resurrection.

Each time we fail and try again, we share in the resurrection.

Each time we hope again after having our hope smashed into pieces, we share in the resurrection. Each time we pick up the pieces, wipe our tears, face the sun, and start again, we share in the power of the resurrection.

The message of Easter is that nothing can destroy us anymore – not pain, not sin, not rejection, not death. The message of Easter is that Christ has conquered all, and that we too can conquer all, if we put our faith in him. That's what the resurrection is all about. That's what we celebrate this morning. It's the good news that every Good Friday now has an Easter Sunday. All we have to do is open our hearts to the grace that Jesus won for us on the first Easter Sunday, nearly 2,000 years ago.