

It finally here: the moment we've been waiting for. This is where our Lenten journey of the last 6 weeks has brought us. The road to Calvary does not end at the cross or the tomb. It brings us to Easter. The Lord is risen!

Even though we see the signs of Easter all around us – and there are many, and they are beautiful – there are some among us who may not truly feel Easter joy in their hearts; there are some for whom Easter has not brought new life and new hope. In spite of Friday's positive employment figures, hope for many still seems very dim: when will there be a new job opportunity? Not much cause for Easter joy there! And what about all the people who have lost their businesses, or their homes, or their savings: is there any hope that they will ever get established again? Not much cause for Easter joy there! Just think of all the people in Haiti, who continue to suffer, in spite of the generous worldwide response to the earthquake: is there any hope that their lives will ever get back to normal? Not much cause for Easter joy there! Think too of all the Catholics in Europe who are now going through what our country went through several years ago with the endless revelations of child abuse by clergy: is there any hope that they will ever be able to put their trust in Church leadership again, or have respect for the moral teachings of the Church? Not much cause for Easter joy there!

When Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, took spices and went to the tomb at daybreak on the first day of the week, they had no cause for Easter

joy. When they failed to find the body of Jesus, they were puzzled (Luke says.)

What's going on? What happened to Jesus? And then when 2 men appeared to them, they were terrified, and bowed their faces to the ground; they couldn't imagine what was happening. And the two men said to them: "Remember what he said to you . . . that the Son of Man must be crucified, and rise on the third day." And then, *then* they believed, and *then* they had hope, and *then* they had cause for Easter joy!

Today, as we face all our puzzlements – big and small; as we face all our challenges – rebuilding a nation or rebuilding a trust; as we face all the things that frighten us to death – loss of income, loss of home or business or whatever; these words are spoken to us: "Remember what he said to you." Death is never the end. New life always follows. This is the promise of Easter; and that's our cause for Easter joy!

Bishop Robert F. Morneau, Auxiliary Bishop of Green Bay, wrote a little poem entitled "Easter." Here it is:

Is my soul an empty tomb,
cold, silent, dark,
devoid of life, the risen Lord?

Or is my soul a home,
warm, welcoming, filled with light,
a site of Love's dwelling bright?

These Easter questions haunt me,
taunt me into major remodeling.
My architect – the Holy Spirit –
whose cost is grace,
who transforms me into a holy place.

May each of you have much cause for Easter joy!