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St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church

Post Office Box 906, High Springs, Florida 32655

Easter Sunday 2020

*Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia*

*Our triumphant Holy Day, Alleluia*

*Who did once upon the cross, Alleluia*

*Suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia.* (Hymn 207, Episcopal Hymnal)

**Alleluia, Christ Is Risen**

**The Lord is Risen Indeed. Alleluia** (BCP pg. 355)

 This is a glorious day for all of Christ’s followers throughout the world. We, the faithful of St. Bartholomew’s of High Springs celebrate freedom from transgressions committed and welcome the renewal of our eternal lives. The cross is no longer a symbol of our sinful humiliation, but rather a symbol of Divine Love for each of us. Our Lord has risen to show that God will fulfill his promise to the faithful that we too will rise and need not fear death.

 Our Gospel reading John 20:1-18 tells of the wonder and excitement of that First early Sunday morning. First point, this is the validation of our Lord’s teachings and what I believe to be the real beginning of Christianity. I say this because without the resurrection we would have no hope and consequently not be in existence today. Alleluia, Christ is risen!

 Second point, the *truth* of John’s Gospel is so obvious in the description of the event. I believe the track star disciple was John. His first hand witness to all that happened is not a story that one makes up. Read it for yourself and put yourself in what is being said by John. All of creation has just taken on a whole new life under our risen Lord. John, the other disciple, entered the sepulcher after Peter, and says in verse 8, “ . . . and he saw, and believed.”

 The description of the linens and the napkin on the Lord’s head was a game changer for John. The linens were probably somewhat hard from the spices used. I liken it to the times I have been in salt water with my clothes and by the next day they were dried stiff. The napkin that covered the Lord’s head was ”wrapped” and set in a place by itself. No thief or thieves would have gone to this trouble; the body was not stolen. Alleluia, Christ is risen!

 The great point that has to be made here is the affect this day had on the trusted followers of Jesus then and today. The risen Christ puts an end to the idea of living for today because there is nothing after death. Caiaphas, the leader of the Sanhedrin that tried Jesus, was a Sadducee and the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. Roman leaders, guards, and Sadducees were all aware of the prophesy of Jesus rising from the dead on the third day. They had so much at stake with the followers of Jesus to make sure no one stole Jesus’ body. Christianity spread quickly even under extreme persecutions. Anyone asks you how could this be just say, “Alleluia, Christ is risen!”

 Have a blessed and joyous Easter! The Lord is Risen. Much love to all, fr lance+