

Easter Sunday 2008

Fr. Robert VerEecke, S.J.

It's beginning to look a lot like Easter, all around the church.

It certainly does look like Easter. If you've been coming throughout the Lenten season, you' certainly notice a difference. The beautiful plants and flowers, the Easter Candle, the banners, all proclaiming Easter. And of course, the church is overflowing with all of you. That makes it look like Easter. And the clothes you are wearing. Easter bonnets?

It certainly sounds like Easter. Our choir is always beautiful but today you hear those Alleluias which you haven't heard for a while. You hear the words, He is risen as he said! It certainly sounds like Easter

But does it feel like Easter. When my mother who is 93 arrived at logan, the first thing she said to me was "Bob, dear. It doesn't feel like Easter. It's too cold. And I explained that it is pretty early for Easter. About as early as it gets.

So what does Easter Feel like? If it's cold outside, what's happening inside, not just inside the church, but inside you this Easter morning? What did Easter feel like for Mary or Peter or John or any of the first witnesses to the Resurrection? Again I refer to my mother. When my father was very ill and we didn't know how long he would live, my mother said to me, I hope your father doesn't die in winter. I wouldn't want him to be buried in the cold ground. I'd rather he dies in the summer when the ground is warm to receive his body. The body of her beloved husband was so precious to her that even in death she wanted to make sure that the warmth of the earth would embrace him. My father died on July 3<sup>rd</sup> the day before their 55<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. I think of my mom's words when I think of Mary Magdalene in today's gospel going to the tomb of her beloved, to anoint his body with spices

and perfumes. His body was as precious to her in death as it was in life for it  
What did it feel like for Mary as she went to the tomb of her beloved early in the morning and found that the stone had been rolled away. Mixed feelings really. Fear, grief, amazement, panic. It isn't until the Risen Jesus comes to her and speaks her name that she is filled with unspeakable Joy and of course she couldn't believe her eyes but she could believe her heart. Her heart was soaring with love, with astonishment. Now there was nothing at all that could keep her from singing and dancing, He is now and forever.

What does Easter feel like? It feels like love. It feels like peace. It feels like joy that is surprisingly wonderful. Do you feel it? A recent NPR program that I heard interviewing a woman who had gone to many different churches to see what would fit her best mentioned that what she noticed in the 5 Catholic churches she went to visit was that people didn't smile that much. Are you smiling yet? OR is it too cold and early for Easter for you?

Remember it was very early on the morning after the Sabbath that Mary came to the tomb. Easter is always early! More words of wisdom from my mother. Mom's at the age where memory fails. She said to us. You know, I'm always happy! I'm just so grateful for my life. Of course I don't remember lots so I'm just happy right now. Mom is at the stage of her life where there is only joy in the present. And that's Easter. To be in the eternal present where joy and love thrill you and embrace you.

There are some here for whom it feels like Easter. Those who went received baptism, Eucharist and confirmation last night at the Easter vigil and those who were there to share that special moment with them. Does it feel like Easter for you? There are other too for whom it feels like Easter. These brothers and sisters have come to this Easter celebration after months of prayer and reflection. They are coming here to receive the gift of God's

Holy Spirit in Confirmation and coming to the Lord's table for the first time as members of the Catholic community. Some come to us from other Christian traditions, Some were baptized Catholic but did not have the opportunity to receive the fullness of initiation. As part of our RCIA program they have given opened themselves up to God's transforming love.

And so I invite you now to come forward. Christine, Alison, Heidi, Amanda, Jennifer, Laura, John, Lauren