

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come to the tomb – just as we would visit the grave of someone we loved and recently lost - to sit and quietly remember them. They were full of sorrow. Imagine how startling it was for them, then, when the earth began to actually shake – as an angel came down from heaven, rolled away the stone, and sat down on it! The guards were scared out of their wits!

It was an angel who first announced the birth of Jesus, and it's an angel that now announces the miraculous resurrection – “Jesus is not here – he has been raised.” But the Resurrection is far more than just something that happened to Jesus years ago. It was the start of a new age – the promise of God's life available to us even now, and for ever. As we receive Christ into our hearts, the Resurrection story becomes our story, too. Christians all over the world are united today in this celebration of the Resurrection. As God's life breaks in and frees us from the fears that seek to control our lives, we set our minds on things that are above, and we discover our new identity in Christ.

But what's the significance for us now, as most of us are confined to our homes during this pandemic – feeling virtually entombed?

This isn't the first time that Christians have had to contemplate the meaning of the Resurrection during a time of great turmoil. I believe the Holy Spirit is helping us to become more aware of the great need for Resurrection to happen in our world today, of the corrupt and oppressive systems that exist which have brought great harm to the planet and have kept down the poor. At this time, when the world has virtually come to a stop, we've seen that skies have become clear, over China, Los Angeles and the Himalayas. We've learned just how much our lives depend on those who produce, distribute and sell the essential things that we need. We've seen how much we need to value those in the teaching and medical fields. We've learned how much we need to be part of our communities. God is challenging us to face the tendency we have to take everything for granted.

It's not easy to rejoice today when we consider the sick and the dying – all we can do is keep “sheltering at home,” and place them in God's hands. Jesus is risen! darkness and death do not have the last word! We give thanks for all those who have been through COVID-19 and come out the other side. When our lives have been resurrected from this pandemic, may we be more compassionate, hospitable, caring, giving and loving toward one another. Let us pray: As you stand among us now, Jesus, in your resurrected glory, may we know the power of your life; may we turn away from death; and may we become agents of resurrection, wherever we are. Amen.