

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord
April 20, 2025
Year of the Holy Spirit

“Our birth would have been no gain, had we not been redeemed.” (taken from the Exsultet/Easter Proclamation)

May I first begin by wishing to those present, those watching or those reading these words a most joyful Easter to you and your families. I have so often in past years reflected upon Easter Day and its importance for us. This year, I would like to offer something different for our reflection. Let us return to Holy Saturday and, using the private revelations of Anne Catherine Emmerich, reflect upon what must have occurred concerning Mary, the Mother of Jesus, those disciples and others who were left grieving after Good Friday.

We begin with this question: Who was Anne Catherine Emmerich? Sister Emmerich was born on September 8, 1774 and died on February 9, 1824. On November 13, 1803, at the age of twenty-nine, she pronounced her solemn vows thus becoming a religious of the Order of Saint Augustine. Throughout her life, she was graced with mystical experiences, stigmata and visions concerning the lives of Jesus, Mary and others. Her various revelations were collected concerning these persons and events and may offer us fuel for pious reflection this day. I must remind all – these revelations are for private reflection and are not held in the same faith or with the same belief as our public revelation of Sacred Scripture and Tradition. With this public service announcement complete, let us begin.

It is Holy Saturday. We can imagine the disciples of Jesus have gathered to grieve the loss of their teacher. Mary, His Mother, joined by the holy women, had returned from His hurried burial. Now, they walk to certain particular places which would have held meaning to them. We can imagine Mary walking in the Temple. Scenes from His life flood back into her mind. She remembers presenting Him in this same Temple almost thirty years ago. The words of Simeon concerning how her Son would be a contradicted sign, destined for the rise and fall of many, ring in her ears. Other disciples, after completing the necessary prayers offered for the dead, would have quietly walked around the city touching the stones Jesus would have walked upon. Some, maybe the Apostles, would have hid in locked rooms wrapped in grief, shame and remorse. For all those who loved Him have wrapped themselves in the mantle of sadness. Their eyes would be glazed and red from the tears shed as they passed the sabbath waiting until they could return to His sepulchre.

Now, dear family, imagine the shock when, in this time of emptiness and desolation, Mary Magdalen, Salome and the other holy women knock furiously upon locked doors proclaiming He has risen. This heavy fog of loss would have slowly dissipated as these women recounted the open tomb and the celestial light which filled the cave. An angel, much too resplendent to properly describe, sat where His Body once lay, proclaiming: “He is not here; He is risen.” Peter and John racing to and finding the tomb as it was told to them. Finally, Mary Magdalen left standing alone, suddenly greeted by “the gardener.” His words: “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Those words, those questions still echo in our own ears this day. Who are we looking for this day? And, if we have, like Mary, been found by Him, let us rejoice and not weep for we have been redeemed.