

Homily for Easter 2011

**This is some angel!
Definitely not a Christmas angel with fluffy wings and golden locks,
plucking the strings of a harp.
This is Super Hero Angel
who appears as a bolt of lightening,
but lightening clothed in garments as white as snow.
Think light! Think plenty of very bright light!
And this angel is strong - super strong!
Without breaking a sweat he rolls back the large stone
others had rolled into place to seal the tomb of Jesus.
And then, like a very cool Super Hero - he sits on the stone.**

**The guards are paralyzed in fear
so Lightning Angel speaks to the two women, both named Mary,
and he says,
“Don’t be afraid! Don’t be afraid...
What did you expect to find this morning?
His body? Don’t you remember?
He told you he would rise - and he has!
So now, you go tell the men, they’re hiding in fear in the city,
go tell them he’s been raised and he’ll meet you in Galilee.”**

**The angel told the women and sent them to tell the men.
And on the way JESUS met the women and, as had the angel,
told them not to be afraid and, as had the angel,
told them to go and tell the brothers.**

And they did.

**And ever since then,
women and men have been telling men and women
not to be afraid because Jesus has risen from the dead,
just as he said he would.**

**And that’s what the angel, and Mary and the other Mary, and Jesus
and the brothers in hiding are telling us tonight,
“Go tell the others that Jesus has risen and goes ahead of you...”**

Whom are we going to tell?
Will we tell anyone?
Or will we leave the bright, brilliant, beauty of our prayer this night
and go into hiding with what we have celebrated?

There's a custom in the Greek speaking churches,
and in many other cultures and languages, too,
that on Easter, people greet one another by saying
"Christos aneste!" (Christ is risen!)
and the expected reply is *"Alethos aneste!"* (He is truly risen!).

On Easter, this greeting replaces,
"Hi, how are ya?" *"Fine thanks, how're you?"*

This wonderful custom picks up where the gospel leaves off this night.
It continues the telling of the news, person to person,
that Jesus is risen.
Such telling doesn't rely on Easter cards or Easter baskets
or Easter flowers or the Easter Bunny.
Such a telling of the good news relies on us.

It's Easter. What's our message?
Whom shall we tell?
Will we tell anyone?

Come Monday, we'll be asking and telling one another
"what we did for Easter."
We'll speak of where we had Easter dinner
and what we ate and who was there
and of Easter baskets
and how many eggs the kids found around the house.

But consider the message that is ours to tell:
for us, Jesus laid down his life that we might have life
and have it to the full.
He is our Passover lamb, our lasting peace.
In telling and celebrating the story of his dying and rising
we learn again that we are loved by God,
we are forgiven,
we are saved,
we are redeemed.

***Christos aneste! Alethos aneste!
Christ is risen! He is truly risen!***

**This is the news we have heard,
entrusted to our telling for over 2,000 years.
And it is good news.**

Whom shall we tell? Who is waiting to hear?

**Pray with me that the grace of this night
will empower and encourage us
to share with others the peace we find here at the Lord's table
in communion with him and one another in the Eucharist.**

***Christos aneste! Alethos aneste!
Christ is risen! He is truly risen!***

- Rev. Austin H. Fleming