

On that first Easter morning, two angels in “dazzling garments” appeared to the women who were looking for Jesus’ body in the tomb and the angels said, “Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but he has been raised” (Lk 24:1-12). In recent years there have been many books, articles and TV



“documentaries” produced by “progressive” theologians and scholars who are in search of the “historical Jesus.” They conclude that we really do not know what Jesus actually did or taught: “your guess is as good as mine.” Thus, they separate the historical Jesus from the so called “Jesus of faith.” This means, according to these scholars, the “Jesus

of faith” – i.e. Jesus as we understand him today – has little or no connection with the historical Jesus who walked the earth some 2000 years ago: the “Jesus of faith” is a mythical invention of the early Christians; the actual, historical Jesus, has been lost, submerged in history never to be found. My friends, those who reach such conclusions are terribly blind to the reality of who Jesus is: they are seeking the living One among the dead!

Today we celebrate the fact that there is only one Jesus. The historical Jesus and the Jesus of faith are identical. Jesus rose from the dead – he never got lost!! He promised he would be with his Church until the end of the world, that he would lead us and guide us into all the truth, that he would serve forever as the head of the Church against which the gates of hell would not prevail! The fact is, Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever! The Apostles lived with Jesus and after the Resurrection, Jesus lived in the Apostles. He continues to live in all the faithful throughout history: The Jesus known by Peter is identical to the Jesus known by St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Augustine, St. Benedict, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Teresa of Calcutta, and Pope St. John Paul II! Jesus is not lost; he is not dead. The Gospel letters accurately portray what Jesus did & taught

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*The message of Jesus is not a human invention, it is not man-made, it is God's eternal living Word revealed by Jesus and entrusted to His Church to endure until the end of time! Jesus promised to be present to all His disciples, in every generation, and to lead them into all truth through His appointed shepherds – the Apostles and their successors – to whom He said, “When they hear you, they hear me. If they reject you, they reject me.”*

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How do I know Jesus is alive today? There are many ways, but I will mention just one. When Peter reached Jesus’ tomb, he saw the burial cloths alone on the ground – he went home amazed! He did not see the risen Christ (not yet!), but he saw what was left behind: the cloths which had held Jesus captive in death had been broken—they lay helpless on the ground. In my lifetime, I have never seen the risen Christ, but I have seen what he has left behind. I have personally seen and known many people who were wrapped in burial cloths – selfishness, pride, greed, lust, sin, etc. – but have found new life in the risen Christ and now the old burial cloths have been broken, they lay helpless on the ground. I do not have to look far to see evidence of what the risen Christ has left behind. At our beloved St. Isidore Parish, I see every day generous and loving people: those who visit the sick, labor for religious education, attend Mass and Confession with devotion, sit on committees, extend their hands in friendship, and give of their time and money in a million different ways to be of service to others. I realize none of us are perfect, but I can look into your faces and know Jesus has never been lost . . . YOU died with Christ and rose with him!! I must say to all my unfortunate friends who have lost sight of the “historical Jesus”: Why do you continue to seek the living one among the dead? He is not there; He has been raised. For those who have ears to hear, His voice is as clear today as it was in His Sermon on the Mount. Alleluia!!

Happy Easter to all!!      Fr Terry Staples