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Easter Sunday:

HAVE YOU SEEN AND BELIEVED?

One of the most ancient and beautiful traditions among the Christians of Jerusalem is to greet each other on Easter morning with the proclamation, “*Christos Anesti!*” which means “Christ is risen!” The appropriate reply is “*Alithos Anesti!*” which is “Indeed, he is risen!”

At a time when the Christian population in the Holy Land faces so many crises and threats, “*Christos Anesti!*” is a simple but poignant declaration of belief, one that also transports us to the very day of the Resurrection and the Gospel account in John 20 of the empty tomb. For the reader of the Gospel, the assumption of belief that Jesus rose from the dead is an obvious one. But the Evangelist makes it clear that St. John and Peter arrived at the tomb in shock from the events of the preceding two days. Now at the tomb, the Beloved Disciple does not see Jesus’ body and he believes.

St. John points the way for believers. Like the disciples, we are asked to see and to believe, and the details of the Gospel account teach us that the Resurrection is a true theological and spiritual event, but it is also one that happened in history. As Pope Benedict XVI wrote in the second volume of his trilogy on Christ, *Jesus of Nazareth Part 2: Holy Week—From the Entrance Into Jerusalem to the Resurrection*: The Resurrection “is a historical event that nevertheless bursts open the dimensions of history and transcends it. As something that breaks out of history and transcends it, the Resurrection nevertheless has its origin within history and up to a certain point still belongs there. Perhaps we could put it this way: Jesus’ Resurrection points beyond history but has left a footprint within history” [Ignatius Press, 2011].



For those blessed to be in Jerusalem at Easter, the Aedicule in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre that houses the actual tomb of the resurrection, testifies solemnly to the words of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. We behold the footprint of what St. Peter proclaimed in the first reading: “They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. This man God raised on the third day” (Acts 10:39). We must be a people of the resurrection, as St. Paul tells us in the second reading: “Think of what is above, not of what is below.” (Col 3:2)

If you missed donating to the Pontifical Good Friday Collection on Good Friday, you can still donate. Visit the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land at <https://myfranciscan.org/good-friday>. In your donation, you will have added your voice to the testimony of the Christians of the last 2,000 years who have visited the tomb and have proclaimed, “*Alithos Anesti!*”

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