

On behalf of myself and those who minister with me on staff here at ---St. George:

Calvin Snow
Jean Falke
And Kate Root

--at St. Jude:

Calvin Snow, Brenda Boss, Chris Chambers, and Sam Watson

I wish a Happy Easter to all of you. And I hope you get to spend a good deal of time today with those you love and cherish.

Especially if you are with us for the first time – or back with us after being away for a while – we are glad that you have chosen to join us in giving God our thanks and praise today. Know that you are always welcome to be with us – and we would be thrilled to see you back next week – [when, I predict, it won't be quite as crowded as it is today. . .]

Once upon a time – in a small mid-western town, in an equally small Catholic school, a fourth grade teacher planned an ambitious Easter pageant for all the parish to enjoy.

Every boy and girl in the lower grades had a part in the play. And after all the parts were given out, there was still one child left who needed to be assigned a role.

Not wanting to complicate things with another costume to be made – the teacher decided that Peter, a rather simple child – would be given the role of the stone at the entrance to the tomb.

All Peter would have to do is dress in a solid brown shirt and pants—roll himself into a ball and pretend to be a stone. Simple enough.

But after the first rehearsal – the teacher began to feel a bit sorry for Peter – since all the other students got to wear elaborate costumes and actually had lines to deliver in the play.

So she asked Peter if he would like to have another part in the Easter pageant – one that might be a bit more important than just being a stone.

“Oh no,” Peter said. “I am completely happy with the role that I have. Because you do know, don't you, that the stone is the most important part of the play. For if the stone doesn't get rolled away, then nobody would be able to get into the tomb and see that it was empty!”

Oh the wisdom of little children. . . Peter knew that the stone had to be rolled away NOT so that Jesus could get out – He had already risen ---
– and as we will hear for the next two weeks in the Gospel – if Jesus can pass through locked doors – than a stone wasn't going to stop him!

No, the stone had to be rolled away – not so Jesus could get out – BUT so that others could get in – and see that the tomb was empty.

The stone had to be rolled away so that we could get in and see that death had been robbed of its power.

The stone had to be rolled away so that we could get in and see that death had been robbed of its power.

The stone had to be rolled away so that we could get in and see that a new world order had begun –
--so that we could see the truth in Jesus words “destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.”

The stone had to be rolled away – so that we can see, and hear, and experience that by his cross and resurrection, Jesus has set us FREE! Free from sin. Free from death. Free from our way of doing and seeing things. . . Free from all those things that cause us to lose our focus and keep us from committing to our covenant relationship to God with all our minds and all our hearts!

Yes, the stone had to be rolled away – so that we could see that the tomb is empty – and there is only one way of responding to such good news: *alleluia, alleluia – alleluia!*