



19 April 2009  
*Second Sunday of Easter*

Dear Parishioners,

In her book “**Marked for Life: Prayer in the Easter Christ**” Maria Boulding writes:

**In Istanbul in the little church of Kariye Camii there is an early fourteenth century painting of the Resurrection. According to Byzantine custom this is presented as a descent of Christ into the underworld. One of the most striking features of this beautiful work is the sense of rhythm and movement it conveys: Christ appears strong and active; with his right hand he grasps Adam’s wrist and with his left Eve’s, pulling them out of their graves. There is a vivid impression of dancing, as though he were drawing them into his dance of life.**

When we think of Christ, we don’t usually picture him dancing. Some might even find it irreverent. It reminds me of the time I had a professional dancer at a liturgy at St. Jude’s Parish. In dance, she interpreted the Responsorial Psalm as the choir sang. Afterwards, I received a few letters of complaint in the mail! Nevertheless, dance can help us understand the revelatory, hopeful nature of the Resurrection as well as the deeper life Christ offers. To give the impression of Jesus drawing others—and ourselves—into his dance of life helps us understand the palpable joy Easter is; and this joy wants to move us in ways that make us feel more alive. Yet, when was the last time we felt such joy?

As a boy, I remember feeling so excited over something that I spontaneously began dancing in my room; over the years I would get a kick out of watching NFL players dance in the end zone after making a touchdown, though they are fined for that now. Maybe they got letters of complaint as well; and I remember reading about a Maryknoll missionary in Kenya who witnessed his entire congregation dance and sing during the Easter Vigil and how he felt he was born just for that moment. If only we could let such joy take hold of our lives. But so easily we get bogged down and ‘grasped’ in ways that kill our capacity for joy.

Presently, I am reading Kathleen Norris' book **Acedia and Me**. She defines acedia as a "restless boredom" that can infect and hinder our enjoyment of life and the gift that it is. She writes:

**...I had become aware that it was possible to reject time as well as to embrace it. If I wanted to, I could live just barely, refusing the gift of each day.**

With each passing day, Christ wants to take hold of us and pull us beyond ourselves: beyond the various excuses and refusals that cramp our capacity to experience joy. As Easter continues, may we find ways to 'cut loose' and allow Christ to draw us—in the words of Thomas Merton—into the "General Dance" of things.

*Father Tim Clark*