Like Mary, we have seen the Risen Lord.

No, we haven’t stood physically next to him in the garden and had a physical conversation with him. But we have seen Him nonetheless. Because Jesus is alive! He conquered death and, in doing so, lets us know that through Him we have victory over anything and everything. Although he physically ascended into heaven, His Spirit is here with us. That Spirit comforts us and leads us and guides us. That Spirit dwells within us and within others that we meet.

The Rev. Dr. Donald S. Armentrout, a retired professor at the School of Theology at Sewanee, writes this:

“To say that Jesus has risen from the dead means that he is not where we left him. Jesus has not been left back in Bible times. He is still with his followers to teach them and help them. Jesus is not the Jesus of our childhood anymore. He has new tasks and challenges for us as adults. Jesus is not even the Jesus we knew yesterday; he will reveal more of his nature and his power every day of our lives. The women who came to the tomb on Easter morning discovered that Jesus was no longer there, and that has been the testimony of Christians ever since. As he promised, he is always ahead of us, always bringing us new possibilities and new hopes.”[[1]](#endnote-1)

I expect most of us know that Jesus is with us. But sometimes we may not know exactly where to find him. The landscape of our lives sometimes change and Jesus isn’t where we thought he’d be. For example, when a younger person dies, we wonder where Jesus is. Or when we see bad people get ahead and good people have struggles, we wonder where Jesus is. In the midst of this pandemic, as we see folks getting sick or dying, we wonder where Jesus is.

Psychologists tell us that we have a tendency to see bad things happening to others but we just don’t believe they will happen to us or to someone close to us. This is called the optimism bias.[[2]](#endnote-2) When bad things do happen to us, our world becomes so shaken we wonder where Jesus is. He doesn’t seem to be where we left Him. But Jesus is here. He’s alive. He’s bringing some good into every situation. He’s bringing new life.

You see, as Benedictine sister Joan Chittister writes, “the Resurrection of Jesus is not about revivification of an old life, it is about experiencing a new kind of life entirely. And no one knows how it happened, we only know that it happened.” [[3]](#endnote-3)

Jesus is right in the midst of whatever is happening; sometimes we just need to be open to seeing him.

So let’s think about this. Where is Jesus today? He lives in the hearts of the health care workers who care for the sick even at great risk to themselves. He lives in the hearts of those who work in essential jobs so that we can have food. He lives in the hearts of those of us who stay home so that we can flatten the curve, making sure that the health care system can adequately care for those who need to be hospitalized. He lives in the hearts of parents staying home with their kids. He lives in the hearts of those who are struggling because they are unemployed and in the hearts of those who help them. He lives in the hearts of those who comfort those who mourn. He is alive and with those who don’t get the coronavirus. He is alive and with those who do and recover. He’s with those who die to their lives on earth and awake to life with him.

The Resurrection is about Jesus rising and undergoing a metamorphosis from being the Jesus of Nazareth into Jesus who galvanizes all places and all time.

Chittister writes: “Resurrection is about the Incarnation of the Jesus born in Bethlehem to the Jesus born in us**.** It designates the transformation of Jesus who rises from the dead in Jerusalem to the Jesus who rises, if we allow it, in us. The Resurrection of Jesus is about coming to grips with the transformed and transforming presence of Christ then, now, and always. Once that happens, life is never again the same. Life begins anew.”[[4]](#endnote-4)

Jesus is Risen. And we have seen Him. He is here with us. He is here in us.

1. Found in Synthesis, A Weekly Resource for Preaching and Worship following the Revised Common Lectionary, April 2020 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. “It Won’t Happen to Me” by Dr. Richard Osbaldiston, Ph.D., found on the Eastern Kentucky Psychology Degree Online website, <https://psychonline.eku.edu/insidelook/%E2%80%9Cit-won%E2%80%99t-happen-me%E2%80%9D-optimism-bias> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Joan Chittister in In Search of Belief (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publ., 2006, found in Synthesis. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Chittister. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)