

Here we are, the second Sunday of Easter, in the midst of our confusion, doubt, and agitation created by an invisible enemy that sweeps and creeps into every crevice of our lives.

Our response, advised and directed by our community leaders, is to withdraw physically, socially distancing from our office mates, our students, our classmates, our extended family, our communities. That six-foot expanse is an unbearable chasm. How we long for the bridge, the connection, the touch and embrace. That mask serving as a prevention of transmission became the precursor for our Lenten season of preparation, a symbol of this extra ordinary moment of solitude and separation.

We followed Christ through the most meaningful commemoration of our personal faith, a time for soulful reflection, with our masks and six feet of separation.

As we roll that immense boulder and stand at the tomb, we experience a sorrowful intensity of this void in our lives, hearts and minds. We grieve for what used to be and we wonder how much longer this will last.

But just as Mary Magdala and her companions raced to inform the disciples, we know the truth, and we are grateful for the vision and confirmation that Christ is risen. Just as He appeared to Mary and greeted His disciples, we are blessed to see Him in our partners as they remotely conduct operations, efficiently adjusting, directing and guiding our students, faculty and staff.

We see Him, too, helping us maneuver through this new normal, stocking our shelves, serving our drive-thru, removing our garbage, dropping deliveries at our doorway.

We are blessed that He is with us proving His love in our worst and most dire moments in healthcare and economy. We are blessed that He has been with us all this time guiding our charity and outreach. Everything has changed, nothing will ever be the same.

We thank you, Jesus, for this gift of Easter Joy, the gifts of peace and mercy. As we turn to you, Holy Spirit, we thank you for this merciful embrace of our acceptance and surrender. You have brought us together, dear God, because you are the same, now and forever.

Amen.

-Itza Casanova, Provost's Office