

EASTER SUNDAY MEDITATION FROM THE RECTOR APRIL 12, 2020

Dear Friends,

On just days before we join in the celebration of the Resurrection, I continue my prayers for each of you and your families that you are resolved to stay strong and safe during this dangerous health crisis.

For us this time means the loss of table fellowship with family and friends, the loss of a work community, for our children their school and peer community, the anxiety for a loved one who is considered “essential” personnel and must work in the midst of possible infection, and for some too, the loss of income or even the loss of a job, and worse, the experience of grief for a loved one who suffers.

Everywhere in the world, our global brothers and sisters are struggling in similar or more dreadful ways than we are here. Thankfully, in our Holy Scriptures, suffering is not glossed over, but borne and yes, transcended. Glory shines in weakness and surrender. We have been taught that through Christ we dare to hope for new life, abundant life.

In the resurrection of Christ Jesus, we have a snapshot of what God is about, a glimpse of what God intends for us. Christ as our Passover brings us mercy, compassion, forgiveness and steadfast presence forever.

We will see each other again, and in the meantime, may our prayers for each other and the world ardently unite us in the everlasting bonds of Jesus Christ our Savior. God Bless and Keep you and yours as we celebrate an unforgettable Easter 2020.

Christ has risen, indeed, Alleluia!

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PRAYER

O God, you summon us to life in the midst of death, peace in the mist of violence, praise in the midst of despair. Filled once again with your unruly Spirit, may we answer your summons and be part of the movement of life. Amen (A Way Other Than Our Own, by Walter Brueggemann).

RAISED BY HIM

According to John, the first person to whom the resurrected Jesus appears is not one of the Eleven, but Mary Magdalene. Why Mary? One answer might be this: none of the Twelve had reportedly been healed by Jesus, but this woman had. Perhaps she remains at the empty tomb, when Peter and “the other disciple” have left to tell the others that the body of Jesus is gone, not just to find his corpse, but possibly because her grief over his death is in direct proportion to the depth to which she has been touched by him in her life. She had been raised by Him.

Maybe what this is saying is that Jesus means the most to those who have been most deeply wounded and paralyzed by the violence, humiliation and prejudice. That is why, when Jesus says “Mary!” to this former “mad” woman, she recognizes him as “Rabbouni.” Being so touched deeply by Christ has a way of sharpening faith.

So, the same healing voice that had commanded the demons to leave her is the same voice that calls her by name outside the tomb. It is, therefore, a voice that she unmistakably hears, because once you have heard Jesus’ voice of deliverance, and have experienced its liberating power, you never forget it. You recognize it wherever or whatever state you are, because it is the voice of the Resurrection, the voice that, out of death, always brings Life.

Thus, the witness of Mary on this Sunday of the Resurrection is what keeps us from turning God’s unforeseen and unparalleled conquering of death through Christ Jesus into something that is less of an affront to reason, and easier to swallow - such as an Easter of spring flowers, or chocolate bunnies. For Mary, and for countless Christians who with her have known the despair of powerlessness and hopelessness and what being set free in Christ can mean – nothing short of the full, spine-tingling story will do.

O God, who by the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light: Grant that we, who have been raised with him, may abide in his presence and rejoice in the hope of eternal glory. Amen (A Gracious Rain, by Richard H. Schmidt).

Easter Blessings of Peace,

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