

Easter 2015

Unlimited mercy of the Father. The celebration of Life now and forever. glorious reversal. 9/11, Kennedys and King assassination. IN the past, Lincoln or Romanoff czar family, the archduke Ferdinand and his wife bombed to death and the start of WW1

Family members, spouses, parents, friends, those close to us who died suddenly or slowly in agony.

Or what about those who are living with Alzheimer's or dementia. They are physically here but the person we know and love is gone.

The feeling of these thoughts and experiences are what Good Friday was all about.

That is why Easter Sunday is so spectacular! The dead shall be raised they will be alive again and be with us, come to us, be with us.

To all his followers, Jesus' crucifixion and death seemed at first a crushing, disillusioning end, without hope or redemption. For them, all was lost, all was dark. Despite the promises they wanted to cling to, it appeared that Jesus and his cause had been defeated. After all, he had suffered the humiliating shame and the discrediting reality of death by crucifixion

When involved in a death of a beloved, there are many things to do. Make arrangements for the body's removal and preparation for a funeral, contacting other to tell the news. In the midst of you grief, there are things that have to be done. Feeling and ears are put aside for the moment, but the emptiness and strangeness is ever present.

The women stayed with him throughout this tragedy. The women stayed with him even after his death. Despite their despair, they went to his tomb early that morning. Yet what these broken-hearted, still-faithful women found when they arrived was that the body of Jesus was not there. So they became the first to experience the frightening, awesome discovery that sometime during the night he had risen.

It was facing Jesus' death and continuing to stay true to him afterward that allowed them to discover the Resurrection. They found that he was alive to them in a way they could never have imagined, in a way that could never end. They discovered that what the world put to death, God raised high. This is the meaning of Easter: God's love triumphs over every barrier.

Easter Day (B) – 2015

Today is the day

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[Acts 10:34-43](#) or [Isaiah 25:6-9](#); [Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24](#); [1 Corinthians 15:1-11](#) or [Acts 10:34-43](#); [John 20:1-18](#) or [Mark 16:1-8](#)

Can you image that celebrating Easter might bring danger for most of us? The danger comes from our knowing in advance the outcome of the drama – that Jesus rose again. Knowing what is going to be said and sung this morning, we are in danger of not being shocked by this unimaginably joyous, unprecedented event.

If we are not careful, Easter can become just another one of those stories with a feel-good, happy ending. If we are not careful, we will cease to be slack-jawed. If we are not careful, the hair on the back of our necks will not stand up when we hear the almost unbelievable Good News.

This is so, because familiarity can breed, if not contempt, then at least a ho-hum, of-course-he-rose-on-the-third-day kind of attitude. If we succumb to this familiar thinking, Jesus' death on the cross is hardly a life-changing gift, but rather a short pause in a celebration lined only with bunnies and baskets, colored eggs and family dinners.

Obviously, in the depth of our faith, we cannot afford to become so complacent. It is important that we understand Easter profoundly and appreciate its ultimate value; important that we remember that it follows and gives meaning to the weight of Good Friday and the pain that black day bears. The sadness and darkness of Good Friday discloses several things that should never be glossed over – lest Easter lose its goose-bump-producing, almost too-good-to-be-true character.

The women disciples were among the very few who stayed with Jesus until the end, waiting with him until he died. They knew he was dead, that it was no illusion. For them as well as for all his followers, Jesus' crucifixion and death seemed at first a crushing, disillusioning end, without hope or redemption. For them, all was lost, all was dark. Despite the promises they wanted to cling to, it appeared that Jesus and his cause had been defeated. After all, he had suffered the humiliating shame and the

discrediting reality of death by crucifixion. Maybe his opponents were right; his death showed him to be just a deluded messianic pretender.

Despite this apparent reality, the women stayed with him throughout this tragedy. The women stayed with him even after his death. Despite their despair, they went to his tomb early that morning. Yet what these broken-hearted, still-faithful women found when they arrived was that the body of Jesus was not there. So they became the first to experience the frightening, awesome discovery that sometime during the night he had risen.

At first, however, they did not know what to make of his absent body. Terror and amazement seized them, and they fled the tomb. These women became the first believers for whom it was not enough just to know that the tomb was empty. Because for all who are discerning, the empty tomb does not prove the meaning of the Resurrection. The women's experience shows us what else is necessary.

It was facing Jesus' death and continuing to stay true to him afterward that allowed them to discover the Resurrection. They found that he was alive to them in a way they could never have imagined, in a way that could never end. They discovered that what the world put to death, God raised high. This is the meaning of Easter: God's love triumphs over every barrier. Easter means that no power on earth can destroy the reality that is Christ. The angel gave the women the clue that unlocks for every Christian the power of the Resurrection. The angel instructed them to tell all the other disciples that Christ was raised and had gone before them into Galilee. The angel told them that they should quit looking for Jesus in death, but rather, find him alive in a new way, in the life of the world. If they could do so, they would discover the meaning of the Resurrection. They would discover that even despite our lack of commitment to God, God remains committed to us – in a loving, unconditional, no-strings-attached kind way – despite how much or little we might deserve that love. They will discover that God makes them the most precious beings in creation – people who are worth dying for.

Easter is coming face to face with a Jesus who has not just reversed the power death, but has completely triumphed over it.

Today is *the* day in our faith to proclaim this fabulous news. The Good News of the Resurrection is that Christ is a light that overcomes all the darkness that life can entail. That light overcomes the darkness we experienced in Holy Week when we passed through vivid reminders of our human frailty and sin, reminders of how easy it is for us to be gobbled up by the power of the enemies of God.

Now – today – we can declare that things are different.

Now we know we have the love and light of Christ going before us and living within us. Now we can see the way and dare to bring that love and light to the darker parts of our world.