

April 1, 2018

The Resurrection of the Lord

Easter Sunday

Acts 10:34-43

First Corinthians 5:6-8

John 20:1-9

While the particulars will vary, most of us have personal stories of great loss, defeat, embarrassment, fear and pain. In like manner many of us have personal experiences of great happiness, success, courage and fulfillment. While both the highs and lows of life have shaped and formed us, many are hesitant to share the details of either with just anyone. Precisely because these experiences/events have intimately contributed to making us whom we are, they are held tightly within our memories and only shared among those with whom we are building strong relationships.

Which brings us to the Scriptural stories we have been unfolding for this past week, especially the passages from this morning's Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel of John. To many they might sound hysterical, illusionary, fabricated, disingenuous or outright lies. But the details are too vivid: the women going to the tomb and RUNNING to tell Peter and John what they DID NOT find; Peter and John LIKEWISE running...not questioning the women...but RUNNING to see for themselves. The details of the burial cloths set in different spots...the tongue in cheek manner of indicating that one disciple was a FASTER runner than the other...these are the ways in which vivid stories are retold...in the same manner our generation can still retell where we were and what we did on 9-11. This story of the empty tomb, still to be fully understood in the days to come when the disciples would encounter the RISEN Jesus, this a story that mingles their Good Friday's pain, fear, loss and defeat with the unexplainable happiness, possibilities and potential joy of 'The First Day of the Week'-Easter Sunday. This is the story that would define these disciples for the rest of their lives and for which they would sacrifice their lives. This was their story and they embraced it with the 'sacred conviction' that it was their responsibility to SHARE what they had experienced with as many people as they could.

Throughout all the hours, weeks and months since WE last shared our Sacred Stories in their fullness, we have lived our lives. Graduations have been celebrated, job changes accepted, births joyfully honored, anniversaries marked and time-tested relationships deepened. Side by side we have struggled to understand mass shootings, political disarray on all sides, betrayals of vows, broken promises, unbidden aches/pains/surgeries, deaths of loved ones and the inevitable effects of time's passage.

The voice of darkness, the same voice that challenged Jesus to turn stones to bread, encourages us to doubt, to dismiss and reject the stories of resurrection and life. The voices of darkness allure us to believe we are better off alone, that we should look upon each other with suspicion and judgment. The voices of darkness tempt us to seek vengeance rather than mercy, to see kindness as weakness and to believe lies to be the truth. Thus has the voice of darkness done for as long as humanity has existed...which is precisely why the INCARNATION, of God becoming human, occurred....so that one of us...a God-Human, in the person of Jesus, could be the lens by which we can clearly see and embrace what the LIGHT reveals to be freeing and good while equally seeing that the lies, isolation and vengeance, promoted by darkness, lead to captivity, deprivation and enduring pain.

On this Easter morning, the Sacred Stories believed and embraced by the first disciples of Jesus, have once again been shared and THE LIGHT of Christ is shown to still be bright and available to all. These are good days to remember the many times the GRACE of God has enabled you to walk out of darkness, strengthened you to carry whatever Cross was heavy on your heart and helped you to see God at work within your months and years. These are good days for you to add your OWN testimony to that of Peter and John and the women at the tomb...Jesus is alive, Jesus is real, you have encountered him, time and time again. Darkness wants you to forget what you know but our SACRED STORIES help you to see and embrace the truth.

Darkness tried hard to kill Jesus and end his story...but he is ALIVE and WELL, shining bright, with pierced hands and heart open to YOU.

*Remember your own SACRED STORY...join it with the sacred stories of billions of people throughout the centuries;
Easter is not a date but the LIGHT that shines when you live what you know to be true. Jesus IS RISEN...*

Shine BRIGHT and BE EASTER!

Thank you for journeying from far and wide to share our Santa Clara de Asis celebrations of Easter. For those of you new to our community, a special welcome...I hope those surrounding you have been gracious and kind. Our entire Season of Lent, combined with the fullness of Holy Week and now Easter Weekend is made possible through the sacrifice and dedication of those who want our liturgical celebrations to be as excellent as possible. **My THANKS** to our Music Ministry, Hospitality Teams, Sacristans, Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Knights of Columbus, Greeters, Art and Environment Participants, Mary Chavez, Philip Parke, Pam Melancon, Billy Wojciack, Emily Bent, Marc Jordan, Kirsten King, Pat deFries, Seminarian Michael, Maria McFarland and EACH OF YOU who bring Santa Clara to LIFE. May the blessings of the Empty Tomb of Easter surround you, keep you safe in your travels and fill your hearts with precious memories....remember, you are loved! FKB