

April 21, 2019

Easter Sunday

Acts 10:34-43

Colossians 3:1-4

John 20:1-9

But for a few, nobody cared.

On the FIRST Easter there were NO Easter egg hunts, NO chocolate bunnies, NO afternoon brunches. For the handful of people who had adhered to the teachings of Jesus, there WAS fear, loss, confusion, doubt, mystery and did we mention, fear. It is important to also recall that the events of Holy Week: the Last Supper – the Crucifixion of Jesus – the Laying of Jesus in the tomb...all of this occurred within the midst of a thriving city of its day, Jerusalem. Only a tiny number of followers of Jesus took note of what was occurring. For the thousands of other inhabitants of Jerusalem, on the ‘first day of the week’, they went about their lives as they always did, shopping, preparing food, traveling, dealing with the Roman authorities, getting by as best they could as citizens of a country occupied by a foreign oppressor. The vast majority of people did not care that there had been three more crucifixions on the previous Friday; crucifixions were common place and thus the people avoided Golgotha’s stark reminders of Roman punishment.

‘On the first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews...Jesus came and stood in their midst.’

Following the events of Friday, the disciples of JESUS were dealing with, the loss of their beloved Master, confusion regarding their future and the sure certainty that their fate would in all likelihood be the same as what befell Jesus...they would be rounded up and exterminated. It was within this confusion and fear that the resurrected Jesus came and stood in their midst. Showing them his hands and his feet, eventually encouraging Thomas to put his finger into the nail marks and his hand into his side, Jesus began to dispel their doubt and open their minds to all that he had tried to convey when they walked the dusty pathways of Galilee and Nazareth.

‘Unless a seed falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a seed. But, if it dies....’

These Lenten weeks of journey have endeavored to furrow the hardened soil of our hearts and minds, to allow the seeds of Jesus’ words to implant themselves within our lives. Easter resurrections do not occur without suffering, loss, confusion and even despair. The road to Easter resurrections is not a cakewalk of continual success. Resurrections occur when, what we thought would satisfy and fulfill us, prove to be empty lies and render us confused, broken, lost and afraid. The FOLLY of seeking complete fulfillment by embracing the glory of the world becomes the CROSS upon which we exhaustingly hang. Narcotic addiction, escaping into the wretched fantasy of pornography, a bigger house – a bigger boat – an ‘enhanced body’ – the allure of the world exhausts and depletes us. What the world sees as failure, God sees as opportunity; when our hopes and endeavors have left us broken and furrowed, then the seeds of Jesus can be planted amid our dark recesses.

‘Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...’

Any more than the FIRST Easter saw the disciples rebounding with glee and exuberance, Easter resurrections in 2019 take time, patience and perseverance. Set-backs will occur. Doubt will surface. Confusion and regrets will entice us to return to old patterns. New-normals (trendy words hated by some...but true true) and fresh routines must replace old rhythms (‘We do not put fresh wine in old wine-skins.’) The fresh beginnings of Easter resurrections may lack the flash and bang of worldly accomplishment; the temptation to return to remembered pursuits will forever tempt (When Satan had finished tempting Jesus, he departed...for a while.) Yet, with each passing day, Easter will grow. Each step of resurrection takes us further from the tombs in which our old ways had constrained us. With each day, each breath, Easter grows.

‘Look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able...so shall your descendants be.’

On the FIRST Easter, but for a few, nobody cared. On THIS 2019 Easter, we join untold billions who have hungered for fresh beginnings and new hope. Resurrections take time...but Jesus is indeed risen from his grave and we are invited to rise from our own. We may stumble, we may fear, we may return to old tombs and traps, but God is not stingy; Easter resurrections are offered on Wednesdays as well as Sundays, in October as well as in Spring, at midnight on a dark highway or within a flower bedecked hall in Yorba Linda. We have a God who pursues us and extends his Cross to us, not so we may flail and fail but so that we may use it to climb out of a lifetime of graves and tombs, and with the help of his grace, ‘have life, and have it to the full.’



A HAPPY AND BLESSED EASTER TO YOU!!!!

Thank you for sharing this Easter morning/afternoon with our Santa Clara community. With great joy, last evening we welcomed **Dan Dao, Haley Hamilton and Emily Matiasevich, Melvin Benner, Shawna Browne, Darren Campbell, Charles Coburn, Bradley Collier, Anissa Encarnacion, Nichelle Lupo and Gina Matiasevich** to our Roman Catholic Community; if you encounter them in the upcoming weeks, please make sure to congratulate them and offer them your blessing. Bulletins await you with more news of upcoming events, please take one as you depart...and as always, as you celebrate your own Easter traditions, please remember, you are loved. FKB