

21st April 2019 (Easter Sunday, Year C)

Romans 6:3-11; Psalm 117(118):1-2,16-17,22-23; Luke 24:1-12.

'Why look among the dead for someone who is alive?'

The resurrection story that we have come together to celebrate today, is a story of faith! The gospel we read is a strange story. The faithful women disciples come to the tomb to show their respects to the body of their dead leader, and instead they find an empty tomb! It is bad enough to go through the passion and death of Jesus, but now these faithful women cannot even grieve at the tomb of their leader; he is not there!

As we come together today to celebrate another Easter, we have an advantage over the first disciples, we know how the story continues. The mystery for us is how to live the resurrection in our daily life. How does the resurrection shape us?

As individuals and as a community of faith, we are often challenged and have to face grief and loss in our life. We know that even in the darkest of nights, there is always some light that shines through. How do we grieve and at the same time look for that light? How do we live in the emptiness of the vacant tomb?

We have often been told that we are people of the resurrection and that we need to see the light of the new life in whatever we do. We express this by the way we wait for and celebrate Easter with festivities and joy. But how do we express this resurrection? The women who find the empty tomb are told by the angels that Jesus is risen and is no longer among the dead. They deliver this message to the men, who do not believe them!

It is not easy to move from death into life. That is a journey that we need to constantly work at. The first step of that journey is to sit with the women at the empty tomb. In a strange way, new life and resurrection can only come from the emptiness of that tomb. One cannot expect to move to new life without the pain of grief and loss. Before we rise to and enjoy the new life, we need to let go of the old, let the old life die. If we hang on too tightly to the life that we know, then we cannot see and enjoy the new light.

The experience of the resurrection is grounded in love and in faith. Out of love the women woke up 'at the first sign of dawn' and went to Jesus' tomb. Faith is strongly rooted in love and this loving faith helps the women to face the emptiness of the tomb. Luke does not tell us whether they believe what the angels tell them. We only know that they go back to report the news to the rest of the group and are met with lack of belief!

It takes time to understand and believe the news. It takes time for us to learn to live the new life that Jesus offers us, not without pain. As we celebrate another Easter we might need to sit a bit longer in our pain and emptiness, knowing that we too will one day experience new life.

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