

Easter
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Kathleen Owens
All Saints Parish, Syr., NY

Easter

In our Easter Gospel we see the scene of women, at the end of the Sabbath and at first light, going to the Tomb...bringing oils to fully anoint the body of Jesus. It had been a rushed job, needing to be finished before the Sabbath began...

Hearing their conversation, we have to admire their determination - "Who will roll back the stone from the entrance of the tomb?" 3 women and a huge boulder - yet they kept going...

When they reached the tomb, they found the stone already moved back - imagine their amazement and concern! Then - as they looked in, they saw someone sitting there, waiting for them...knowing why they were there! He says:

He is risen! He is not here!

They are stunned, frightened - Jesus is not there - the tomb is empty! Then the young man tells them to go to the disciples and tell them to go on to Galilee.

The Gospel of John tells us Mary Magdalene does go on to the disciples and let's picture that meeting....

Hear here knocking on the door where they are staying and then knocking again - before the door opens slightly and Peter peers out to see who is there... They had stayed together - in grief and in fear - would they -as followers - be taken next?

"Peter!", exclaims Mary - "The stone in front of Jesus' tomb has been rolled away and

He is not there! He is not there!

Peter: "What do you mean - He is not there!

John joins in: "Mary, we both saw him die!"

Mary: "I know - I know - but the tomb is empty... He is not there!

Peter and John exchange looks and push past Mary out the door...running to the tomb.

John can sprint and gets there first, but just looks in...

Peter, panting, catches up and goes in... The tomb is empty! The body wrap is on the ground and the cloth covering his face is folded up in a place by itself...

John has a sense of something big going on here - Peter stands there distraught and confused... shaking his head...

He is not there!

For those few people that day - there was no instant understanding... they were so confused - bewildered and still fearful of the tension in the crowds in Jerusalem...

Writers for centuries have been exploring these next scenes we have from Scripture.

One has to believe the disciples talked among themselves endlessly - trying to grasp what the meaning of it all was...

Scripture gives us many occasions where Jesus appears to them - the same, yet different--

In many instances he is suddenly *just* there... then answering questions, eating a meal - cooking a meal - showing them he *is* Jesus as they knew him - yet different - giving them time for a new understanding to sink in...

.....
We are still like those disciples in that time of bewilderment... We want to deny something bad happening... fight against having things go another way - ways that will hurt us -

We question God.....some walk away from God because our reason simply can't explain it...

As the Spirit of God filled the opening heart and minds of the disciples, they grasped that Jesus was more than a Prophet...

For the last couple of days we have been talking about God's Presence in us.

Listen to the Scriptures, especially John's Gospel - chapters 14 - 17... we can hear the truth explained. ... making sense to us in the years beyond His death...

Make your home in Me as I make mine in You...

You did not choose me, no, I chose you - to go out and to bear fruit that will last!

Whoever remains in Me - with Me in you - bears fruit in plenty...

What I command you is to love one another...

There are so many wonderful statements that we have prayed with over the centuries...

Words that have come to dwell in us and Words that have become the truth in us...

God had become human in Jesus - so we could know and accept God's Presence IN us. God needs us to understand that the hope and unity of our world will come..... through the unity we share with God and with each other!

These words of Jesus have lived in the hearts of people throughout the centuries and we know that the Love that IS God flows through the strength and courage of our brothers and sisters.

In just the last 50 years - think of it!

1968 - MLK - assassinated - yet his dreams still ring out and we heard them again from his granddaughter at the March in DC last weekend.!

**The Call: End Racism!
Jesus is Risen - He is Here!**

1980 - Archbishop Oscar Romero - to requote Fr. Fred's from last Sunday...

"If they kill me - from this moment I offer my blood to God for the redemption and resurrection of El Salvador..."

6 months later December of 1980

4 American religious women who stayed in El Salvador to be with the poorest as a sign of God's unity with them - were raped and murdered...
so many more happened in Central America after that -

But fast forward to 1992 -

5 American Sisters from Illinois, missioned in Liberia - decided to stay there with the poor, the sick and powerless people - and were shot and killed

**The Call: End the Oppression of the Poor!
He is Risen! He is Here!**

1994

In the Rwandan Genocide a woman came forth from her harrowing escape - she and 7 other women locked in a bathroom for 91 days, terrorized and waiting to be found and tortured....

and yet Immaculee Ilibagiza has astounded the world with her ability to forgive those who even who killed her family.

**The Call: Forgiveness can follow Genocide!
He is Risen! He is Here!**

2001 -

The many first responders running into the World Trade Center to save people... and - for us here - Fr. Mychal Judge - a Franciscan priest - first in with the firemen and first carried out and laid on the altar of St. Peter's, the first Catholic Church in NYC...

2008

A decision was made to merge two churches - and the people said: Let us make a new church together and the beautiful tabernacle and the stations of the Cross of one now grace the other showing the faith and hearts of two can become one! All Saints was born!

**The Call: Two peoples can live and serve in unity!
He is Risen! He is Here!**

2012

A young Pakastani girl was living through those horrible times of war - yet longing to learn - she was impassioned about girls rights to education and since her parents agreed with her, they allowed her to express herself. As her words were carried to the world, in 2011 Malala's father was threatened as she was nominated for the International Children's Peace prize...

While riding home from school in a van, it was stopped and Malala was shot in the face! She survived and was flown to England for surgery and lived to speak at the United Nations and became the youngest to ever receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

**The Call: Education is Necessary and A little child shall lead them!
He is Risen! He is Here!**

2018

After years of deaths in school shootings here in the United States, the teens of Parkland, FL, said "ENOUGH!" and began the journey towards the responsible use of guns and controls to bring safety back to schools...

**The Call: We must Stop the Violence!
We CAN Live in Peace!**

In these accounts within our lifetime - we know that what was going on within these heroic people was a deepening truth and a faith that people in our world can live together in nonviolence, love and mercy. As we gather together to celebrate that message this Easter and to join with one another to bring it forth - we know we are not alone - for within us and through us - we carry God's Presence and we can proclaim once more:

He is Risen! He is Here!