

Good News Daily

Easter Sunday, March 27

John 1:1-18 *The light shines in the darkness, and darkness could not overpower it.* (v.5 NJB)

The light shining in the darkness is Resurrection life, more powerful than sin, evil, and death. I think it's important to realize God raised Jesus from the dead in the deepest darkness of night. Our human experience often finds us mired in spiritual darkness. We may be struggling with rejection, abandonment, substance abuse, illness, loss of a job, unexpected poverty, or depression.

The Good News of the Resurrection is Christ is always rising to new life in the midst of our darkness. I know this to be true. I was raised in the nightmare of parental abuse. I experienced, first hand, the terror, violence, and moral loss of combat in Vietnam. Yet, even in these darkness experiences, something reached out to me with love, compassion, and hope. I've since learned what I was experiencing was the Risen Christ, reaching out to raise me up with him to New Life. Truly, I'm alive today because of that saving love.

In the midst of darkness cry out to Jesus, reach out to him. He'll never fail you! Christ is risen. Alleluia!

Exodus 12:1-14; Psalms 148, 149, 150

Birthdays: Pamela Barras, Tracy Dugger, Peter Fruzer, Christine Gregory and Thomisina Turner Diggs

Anniversaries: Terrance & Joanna Lee, Lawrence & Vilma Trager and John & Lydia Tucci

Monday, March 28

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 *The tradition I handed on to you in the first place, a tradition which I myself received, was that Christ died for our sins, in accordance with the Scriptures.* (v.3)

Life in the church is often filled with too many meetings, problems requiring solutions, difficult people, and conflict. It's all to easy to make these realities the substance of what church is all about. In the midst of grappling with these realities, we can lose track of what's really the central part of Christianity. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important core of Christian faith and life.

This past year, a dear friend told me, "I've had enough of church!" I think all of us have shared that experience. When we're in the "enough already!" space, it's time to drop back and remember what's truly important. Spend some time pondering the saving gift of Christ's death. Glory in the gift of Resurrection Life, and all that you've received through it. It'll keep your heart and mind focused on those precious realities. Everything will fall into place. Try it. It works!

Exodus 12:14-27; Psalms 93, 98; Mark 16:1-8

Birthdays: Winston Norman

Anniversaries: Bill & Leslie Brown and David & Paula Morris

Tuesday, March 29

Mark 16:9-20 *But they did not believe her when they heard her say that he was alive and that she had seen him.* (v.11)

It's a very common experience to discover there are people in the church skeptical about the truth of the Resurrection. Perhaps you're one of them? All of us have doubts. Well, we're in good company. When Mary Magdalene tried to share the news of her experience of the Risen Christ with the apostles, they didn't believe her. Yet, as the days wore on, all of them experienced the truth for themselves.

I think the personal experiences of others are helpful information to ponder concerning a reality we're skeptical about. If you find yourself doubting the Resurrection, ask people around you to share their experiences of being raised up from death and darkness to new life. You'll be amazed at what you hear! The most powerful witness to the truth of the Resurrection is always the witness of people who have experienced part of it in their lives.

When you have doubts about a doctrine, don't get defensive. Ask people to share their experiences. You'll be surprised how much that listening can transform doubt into faith.

Exodus 12:28-39; Psalm 103; 1 Corinthians 15:12-28

Birthdays: Tristan Anderson, Sanae Nedd, Shawn Nedd, Jennelle Sibblis and Kandra Williams

Anniversaries: Ainsworth & Racquel Husbands

Wednesday, March 30

1 Corinthians 15:29-41 *If the dead are not going to be raised, then "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall be dead."* (v.32b)

Let's face it, if the Resurrection is a myth, if the Resurrection isn't extended to us in Baptism, then Christianity is nonsense. We might as well sleep-in, and go to brunch on Sunday mornings.

During the last decade, I've had the frequent experience of people, who claim Christianity, forgoing a church service and burial. Instead, they wanted a secular "celebration." (I recently passed a new sign in front of a Funeral Home that read, "We specialize in Life Celebrations.") Here's the rub, those celebrations are about a life that is over, over, over!

The *Prayer Book* used in my tradition proclaims, "and when our mortal body lies in death, there is prepared for us a dwelling place eternal in the heavens." It's time for Christians to speak up. We need to share the Good News about death and resurrection with those around us. The truth is Christ's Resurrection totally

changed the meaning of death. Death is not an end of life. It's an entry into a new and fuller life.

Now, that's worthy of a celebration!

Exodus 12:40-51; Psalms 97, 99; Matthew 28:1-16

Birthdays: Keith Hindsley and Samuel David McDaniel

Anniversaries: Reginald & Racquel Husbands

Thursday, March 31

Matthew 28:16-20 "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you." (v.19)

At the beginning of Lent, I often approach folks in our congregation, saying, "Do you want to really celebrate Easter this year? Let's find an adult to baptize."

All of us have at least one acquaintance or family member intrigued by our Christian faith and life. We could ask them if they want to be baptized, promising to help and support them in preparing for that life-giving event. That would be incredible!

A couple of weeks ago, a friend talked to me about her fear our congregation wouldn't survive. "What can we do?" she asked. "Let's find an adult to baptize," I responded. She looked at me as if I'd lost my mind. I really meant what I told her. If we'd do the real work the church was created, authorized and empowered by God to do, we'd be well on the way to new vitality in our parish.

There are only 360 days until next Easter. Let's find someone to share the wonder and joy of our faith with, inviting them to take the life-giving plunge!

Exodus 13:3-10; Psalms 146, 147; 1 Corinthians 15:41-50

Birthdays: Jessica Laban, Daphne Robertson and Kathleen Weise

Anniversaries: None

Friday, April 1

1 Corinthians 15:51-58 *Thank God, then, for giving us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. (v.57)*

It's been almost a week since the church joyously celebrated the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Many years ago, an author asserted that Christians are the "Easter People." I hope that's really true for us.

My faith tradition observes Easter for fifty days. Five years ago, a member of our congregation exasperatedly said to me, "Can't we move on to something else—it's June—boring!" Really? Easter is not just a day on the church calendar. The joy, power, and wonder of the victory of the Resurrection is eternal and infinite. A great early church theologian wrote that, "A Christian should be an Alleluia from head to toe." In my tradition's Prayer Book, this eternal Easter faith is captured in a sentence (borrowed from the Orthodox

churches): "Yet even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia."

Christ is risen, always, everywhere, every day. Thanks be to God, for giving us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Exodus 13:1-2, 11-16; Psalm 136; Luke 24:1-12

Birthdays: Sahara Avila, John Barbes, Virginia Bennett, Caroline Corris, Cary Spillers and Curt Wild

Anniversaries: None

Saturday, April 2

2 Corinthians 4:16—5:10 *It is God who designed us for this very purpose, and he has given us the Spirit as a pledge. (v.5)*

As I listen to some people describe their Christian faith journey, it often sounds like the obstacle course of my Marine Corps days. Struggle over all the obstacles, and God will reward you.

It's vital to realize God created us for eternal life. We've been invited to join the dance of Resurrection Life with the Trinity since our Baptismal Day. The wonderful news is the Resurrection Dance can start now. If we seek a real relationship with God in prayer, worship, reading and meditating on the Holy Scriptures, and service to others, the Dance begins.

In my decades in the church, I've known many people who've been doing the Resurrection Dance for a long time. Regardless of what life hands them, they keep on dancing as they labor through the obstacles. That's far more joyous and creative than tiredly dragging yourself through life's obstacles, hoping for a reward at the end.

As this Easter Week comes to an end. My prayer is that you've abandoned the obstacle course and joined the Resurrection Dance. God's waiting for you expectantly!

Exodus 13:17—14:4; Psalm 145; Mark 12:18-27

Birthdays: Gail Degraffenreid, Michela Gray and Zachary Spicer

Anniversaries: Cheryl & William Kiehaber

by John Fergeson

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