

Easter Day
12, 2020

April

Trinity Church Lime Rock

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Psalm 137:1-4: By the rivers of Babylon-- there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our harps. For there our captors asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" How could we sing the LORD's song in a foreign land?

Yes, how can we sing of resurrection and triumph in this foreign land of disease and isolation in which we find ourselves?

The psalmist expresses **our** fears and **our** anxiety. He goes on to say, We will never forget Jerusalem. And so for us, Christians, we will never forget Jesus and the power of his resurrection.

Our way of never forgetting Jesus is to remember the events of his life, his death and his resurrection. God came to us in the form of a man. That man, Jesus, who was fully human, and fully divine, died in Jerusalem and the hope of his disciples died with him on the cross. But God raised him from the dead and we remember that resurrection.

Every year we remember the resurrection of Jesus the Christ. In good years when we feel satisfied with our lives, our jobs, and our family we remember that Christ rose dead.

When our country has been at war we remember that Christ rose from the dead. When the enemy attacked us at Pearl Harbor and terrorists attacked us on 9/11 we remember that Christ rose from the dead.

And so now, today, when fear of Covid-19 grips the country and the world, when thousands have died from this disease and we have no idea how many more will suffer and die, when our lives have been turned upside down and everything is strange and different, **we remember that Christ rose from the dead to give us hope and life.** This is not the end of the world as we know it. This is the end of our feeling **comfortable** about our usual safe distance from much worldly tragedy.

People have remarked that Matthew's resurrection story is not all that interesting, John's has the flourish of the Gardener unrecognized, Mark has the intensity of the disciples running away in fear, and leaving us there. Luke's version of the resurrection includes the journey of disciples going to Emmaus, and the opening of their eyes.

What elements does Matthew's account contain? The women who came to the tomb did not bring spices. They came to see. The angel rolled away the rock and then sat down. Perhaps it's an angel's way of saying that there is no one in the tomb. There is no need to

stand. As Jesus has **risen**, so the guards in Matthew's version are like **dead** men. Quite a contrast. Jesus himself appeared to the women on the road as they were going to tell the disciples of the empty tomb. And Jesus tells them not to fear and to go with the brothers to Galilee. Jesus will be there.

Matthew doesn't choose to try to explain the resurrection. He just tells what happened. And we too are at a loss to explain resurrection, we just come to our own understanding and our own resurrection experience. And we look forward to meeting Jesus in Galilee...in whatever form that may take for each of us.

So, we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord once again this year, in a foreign land that we call life today in a world overrun by the coronavirus. The foreign land we inhabit now includes this way of celebrating the Eucharist - which is comforting to many, and unsettling to us all.

And this new and foreign place makes some people want to explain the Eucharist. If we can't explain resurrection, how can we explain the mystery of this sacrament of the presence of God in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit?

Some now are faithfully contemplating the elements of what constitutes a proper Eucharist. Must all the people be present in the room? Is there such a thing as a spiritual communion anyway? But we **can't** explain it. We can only experience it.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is not constrained by church buildings, and altar rails. Jesus is present to us wherever we are. We can be in our homes, we can be in a mine hundreds of feet under the surface of the earth. We can be in a prison where we don't know if we'll ever be released. We can be in a hospital where the rooms and the halls are overflowing with the sick. Or we can be, like the disciples, on our way to Galilee resuming our work of fishing for a living as they await Jesus.

We just know that the sacraments are true and that Jesus is with us.

In this present moment Christ calls for us to come up to Galilee and there we will see him. How can we go to Galilee? We have to be a bit creative; even as people right now are creatively producing face masks, meals for hospital workers, new ways to communicate and ways to purchase our necessities safely in our shops and stores.

We must live in the present difficult time with a hopeful eye to the future.

We must celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ with alleluias and the understanding that Jesus was raised from the dead by a God who loves us, is with us in all our trials and tribulations, and holds up for us today **life** in spite of the foreign land in which we find ourselves.

Through this Spiritual Holy Eucharist today, on Resurrection Sunday, let us give thanks for the risen Christ, let us be fed through the Spirit, and let us spiritually go to Galilee in hope and faith.