

The Risen Jesus Lives among Us When We Love One Another

Some years ago, Bill, a grad student, was returning to college to complete his comprehensive exams. He would be away from his fiancée for more than a month and the very thought of being away from her for so long a time left him sad and depressed.

On the trip back to school, the bus stopped at a small dingy bus station. The place was practically deserted. The student sat down on one of those circular pedestal stools with the stuffing coming out. Sitting across from him at the U-shape counter was an old woman.

“Boy, honey, you sure look depressed,” the old woman said.

“I AM depressed,” he snapped. He found himself tearing up.

The woman tried to reach across and pat his cheek, but Bill pulled back from the woman’s dirty hand.

“What’s wrong, honey?”

He started telling her about his fiancée back home and how much he missed her. He showed the old woman a picture of her.

The woman said, “Oh honey, I never saw such a beautiful woman.”

The old woman told Bill that she had been married to a traveling salesman who had since passed away. Every time her husband had to go away, they both cried – but how happy they were when he returned! “Marriage is wonderful,” the old woman said. “You’ll see: you’re going to have a wonderful marriage. Everything will be fine.”

The old woman suggested he might feel better if he ate something. So, she ordered the last donut underneath the scratchy plastic cover. The woman broke the donut in half and said, “Here, eat this. You’ll feel better.”

Just then an announcement came over the bus station’s tinny public address system. “That’s my bus,” the woman said, picking up her old suitcase. “I’ve got to go.” She disappeared through the station doors.

Just then, Bill remembers, his eyes were opened: Christ was there in the bus station!

Christ was there in the bus station!

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Resurrection: New Life, New Creation;

Resurrection: Our loving Abba God, in the dark, bending over the son and breathing the spirit back into His flesh;

Resurrection: The stone rolled back: an angel appears;

Resurrection: “You are looking for Jesus, the crucified? Be not afraid – He is not here; He has been raised from the dead!

Resurrection: The women run away from the tomb – carrying the Word of Life..., Evangelizers – carrying the Word of Hope!

YES: there is life after death! There is life after the darkness and evil and insanity!

YES: the power of evil and violence in our hearts and in our world is *broken!* *Light and life and dazzling possibilities abound!*

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My brothers and sisters, we here at All Saints, join with the Church throughout the world, a world that is so hurting and broken and bleeding, and we’re proclaiming that: *darkness will never win – death will never win - hatred will never win – violence and terrorism and war will never win!*

This Easter night: We are proclaiming that *hunger and nakedness and homelessness and poverty and economic injustice will never win!*

This Easter night: We are proclaiming that *racism and sexism and homophobia and all the “-isms” that oppress people and hurt people and divide people will never win!*

This Easter night: We are proclaiming that our *personal struggles and demons of greed, addiction, envy, jealousy, sickness and death will never win!*

This Easter night: We are proclaiming that *Jesus has broken the chains that enslave us and our world!*

My brothers and sisters, on this holy Easter night, we are called to believe that: yes, our Christ, our Messiah, our Redeemer, our Liberator, rose from the dead, proving that He was God.

But we don't stop there! This Easter night *isn't* just the 2,013<sup>th</sup> anniversary party, ...a nostalgic look back at the past. This holy Easter night is a call, an invitation to experience the resurrection of Jesus in our own lives and world! Right here! Right now! In 2013!

How does this happen?

My sisters and brothers: *the risen Jesus lives in us and among us when we love one another!*

My brothers and sisters: *God is love, and when there is love, there is God!*

**This** is the essential belief - the essential energy - the essential fire --- the DNA of the Christian message!

Without it, as Thomas Merton writes, "We may say with our lips that Christ is risen, but in practice, we believe Him to be dead, and we believe there is a massive stone blocking the way and keeping us from getting to His dead body."

Our Christian religion, our Catholic church, without love becomes the cult of the dead body of Christ: a mere legalistic and ritualistic formality, fighting over the incidentals and abstract concepts, answering questions that nobody is asking.

A religion that is more troubled with how people love each other rather than how they hate each other is stuck in the tomb.

Merton says, "We must never let our religious ideas, customs, rituals and conventions become more real to us than the risen Christ. We must learn with St. Paul that all religious accessories are worthless if they get in the way of faith in Jesus Christ, and prevent us from loving our sisters and brothers in Christ."

Merton continues: "St. Paul looked back on the days when he had been a faultless observer of religious law and confessed that all his piety was meaningless. He rejected it as worthless. He wanted one thing only:

*"I believe that nothing can happen that will outweigh  
the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus. All  
I want to know is Christ in the power of His resurrection  
and I look on everything else as so much rubbish"*





(Philippians: 3:8-11/paraphrased)

My brothers and sisters, on this Easter night 2013, in the midst of our struggles and brokenness and sin, in the midst of violence and insanity and injustice of our world, we're once again invited to a true encounter with the risen Christ: and this invitation is not some distant 'Pie in the Sky' dream that will happen in the distant future.

A true and intimate encounter with Christ happened in that dingy bus station when that depressed lonely college student awakened to Christ sitting across from him, offering him a donut.

True encounters with the risen Christ awaken something in the depth of our being, a spark, a fire that we didn't know was there.

True encounters with the risen Christ liberate something within and among us – a power we didn't know we had,

-  a hope...,
-  a capacity for life...,
-  a resilience...,
-  an ability to bounce back when we think we are completely defeated...!

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I think we've experienced this in our church in the last couple of weeks. In the midst of the greatest crisis in our Catholic church in the modern era, a group of crusty old men enter the conclave, and elect: Pope Francis! who is to date, driving the Curia crazy by simply being a Servant-Leader, seemingly shedding the incidentals that kept Jesus locked up in that cold, dark tomb of Christendom.

True encounter with the risen Christ in love within us and among us, liberates and births forth: a capacity to grow, a capacity to change, a power of creative transformation.

From the terrible, almost incomprehensible violent tragedy in New Town, Connecticut, there is a pretty good chance that love will overcome insanity and there will be some significant step taken to make our nation a bit less dangerous and violent place to live.

For the Christian, there is no defeat because Christ is risen and lives within and among us; a Christ who has overcome all that seeks to destroy us.

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My sisters and brothers, the bottom-line - the essential - the DNA to being a disciple of Jesus; the heart of what this holy Easter night is all about, the core of the Creed and Baptismal vows that we are invited to commit ourselves to tonight .....

The primary reason that our Nienke Dosa and Adrian Friedman have decided to formally commit to being Christian in the family of the Roman Catholic Church at All Saints tonight; the energy that has lead the Murozik family to have their child, Vander Price baptized at our 11:30 mass on Sunday

is simply:

the belief that: the risen Jesus lies in us and among us when we love one another!

God is love, and when there is love, there is God!!!

AMEN ! Alleluia!