



Easter Sunday Thoughts for the Week Resurrected!

Mark 16:1-8 NIV

"Don't be alarmed," he said.

"You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified.

He has risen! He is not here.

April 5, 2015

Thoughts for the Week

Scripture: Acts 10: 34, 37-43, Colossians 3: 1-4, 1 Corinthians 5: 6-8, John 20: 1-9

The theme we shall explore hinges on the idea of beginnings; that is what is described for us in the Easter scriptures, the beginnings of the Christian community after the dark days of the passion and death of the One whom the Christian community had thought would be their Lord and savior.

Our own experience will tell us that all beginnings can be fearful. I can remember my first day in grammar school. I didn't know where to find the bathroom. I remember my first day as a deacon when I still was not sure whether the priesthood was truly life's work that I could handle, intellectually and spiritually. It's always a challenge for a minister to sit before an empty computer monitor and wait for the first word of inspiration to come.

Ask anyone for their remembrances about the career they have chosen. Ask the young man or woman who has decided that marriage is a worthwhile endeavor whether they had some trepidation about the decision.

In short, most beginnings are fearful because we never see the future clearly enough to step forward and "get our feet wet."

This, obviously, most have been on the minds of those early Christians, men and women, who were hoping that this Jesus of Nazareth would give them the courage and encouragement to forge on into the future.

The reason why new beginnings are so fearsome is because we will always need to leave behind us some assurances that have served us so well. The child, freshly born, needs to leave behind the security of the womb. The youngster heading off to grade school leaves behind a tearful mother. The man or woman who struggles with the notion of leaving behind the Sunday School of their childhood and explore Christian life as an adult must surely find the decision fearful. In short, the certain and dependable life of one's past is not easily left behind.

Perhaps, the greatest fear of all is in the question, "Now what?" What does the future hold? Will the faith I have in this decision carry me through the long and tough days that surely lie ahead? In short, it is this lack of surety, this darkness, the sense of the unknown that gives us pause.

Without doubt, this must have been on the minds of those early Christians, our early brothers and sisters, on the day some women came to them and proclaimed that this Jesus, their friend who had died, was raised. "Their words seemed like nonsense to us." This was the response of Peter and the others. Remember, they had not yet met Jesus at Emmaus or on the shores of the Sea of Galilee where he offered them breakfast. Pentecost and the winds of the Spirit had still not come down upon them. The future was an unanswered question.

Could it not be said, that our Christian life must often seem like the experience of those early Christians? With each new day, we rise from sleep to face questions of faith, questions whether our life as a Christian truly fulfills our most ardent hopes. Will we be able to get through another day of disappointments, discouragements, and failures and still remain firm in our Christian

faith? When the entire world seems to be moving in a different direction, when Christian life seems to be “nonsense” will I have the persistence to follow the compass setting I chose so long ago?

In some sense, we are all like those early Christians for whom nothing seemed very sure in those days after the resurrection.

At the same time it is heartening to know that, like Peter, James, John, the women at the tomb, we do belong to a community of sure believers. We do all, this, this Christian life, together, sharing each other’s doubts and supporting one another’s hopes.

Easter Sunday is truly the first day of the rest of our life. Yes, it happens every year, but given our wavering Christian hopes, we need to hear Easter good news afresh each year.

The question Easter leaves us is Now What? What do we do with the assurance that Christ has risen and rises with us each time we put the darkness of our past aside and move with faith into our personal future?

Our only option on this day is to live as though the resurrection were happening today...because it is. The future is ours.

Happy Birthday Tina (4/8)

Prayer Thought for the Week

We praise you, God of all creation, for your mercy is vast and your love beyond our comprehension. We give thanks for the Spirit who unites us and draws us closer to one another and to you.

We confess our shortcomings. Forgive us, we pray, and strengthen us as we engage in Christ’s mission of peace that is for all creation.

We uphold for your blessing of peace the people of Kazakhstan. Guide their leaders as they seek resolution to conflicts within their nation and with neighboring countries. Bless all who work for just and peaceful communities in all nations.

Help us recognize the Divine presence in the lives of all persons, and guide us as we celebrate that which makes us unique and that which binds us together in sacred community.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Stewardship Thoughts for Lent

Trustworthiness & faithful dependability
is the mark of the excellent steward.

Christ-centered stewardship is the by-product of a Christ-like attitude.

So Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.” **Mark 10:42-45**

At the most basic level, the true steward is a true servant. Faithful dependability as a Christian steward relates to the management of money, but also to a great deal more. The “portfolio” for which we are responsible includes a wide range of components, and God’s expectation is that we make the most of each one. Think of all the “assets” you have under management: your money, your time, your possessions, your opportunities, your influence, your relationships and much more.

To be a trustworthy steward, you must handle the small things with the same regard as the big things and you must see everything in life as sacred.