

Easter Year C 2010

“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.”

As a child I was terribly afraid of the dark....I had to go to sleep with a light on somewhere in the corner of the room...I remember going to Marianna caverns just south of Dothan with my third grade class. At one point during the tour the park ranger guide turned the lights off just so we could experience what the total absence of light was like....I could feel fear welling up inside me...and about the time I started to panic, the lights came back on, and soon we were back out into the light of day. I still remember the feeling, the joy of daylight

But over the years I've mostly gotten over my fear of the dark...I suppose I have acclimated to it...or maybe I just don't pay attention to it as much...there are nights when I'm glad to check the clock and see that it is only 3 O'clock in the morning, and I still have a few hours more in the still darkness of forgetful sleep....one can forget in the dark.

I'm afraid that it is a human trait to get acclimated to the dark. I think it is all too easy for us to make peace with it...It is what Eliot calls death in life....walking through life drowsed with the heaviness of death and grief....Luke describes the disciples upon their waiting for Jesus' arrest as drugged with grief....this so-called peace with death is in short a way to cope....because the fear I think is...How would we survive if we really looked at the dark for what it is...to stare into the abyss....and see ourselves there entombed....forever asleep in dark dreamlessness, there a fossil of lost hope, a relic of a life lived without purpose, for there is no purpose...there ossified in sepulcher forever by the hardness of a world so ruled by the dark.

But enough of this talk!...this of which I speak is an illusion....Tonight is the time to remember who in truth we are....that it is true to hope...and true that we have purpose...and true that life is worth living....the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is the means by which we recognize who we are in truth...we declare at our Baptisms that we are no longer subject to the ways of evil and death, but that we are raised to life in the new creation...the right order...the way God imagines the world to be, and we rightly in it. If we believe that Jesus is not the only one crucified, but that the crucified are forever among us...as the poor, the persecuted, the sick and the shamed, the victims of injustice...then we should also believe that Jesus isn't the only one who was ever raised from the dead...we say it out loud in our burial rite, and at Baptism...that we are buried with Christ in his death,

and raised with him in the resurrection....and we're not talking about life after death here only...resurrection life is first and foremost about the way we live now.

To live in resurrection life is to awaken from the sleep of death and to live our lives as the ones raised in solidarity with the dead of our world....those yet to be raised...those waiting to stand with us... Resurrection, the recognition of our true nature...Remember?...We are the raised body, heirs of our brother Jesus who carry on the ways of justice and forgiveness and mercy and healing and welcome in raised courageous bodies...the way of resurrection still alive as fire among us...resurrection not merely an artifact of history but a piece, the central piece of reality, and there is nothing sentimental about it....in fact it is a life long calling of hard work and responsibility, so that others are raised with us...the dead of our world, those ossified, by the dark, in their tombs, long forgotten.....they are to be raised as Jesus is raised from the dead...

The message of this the coming of the new creation, this resurrection life is that our true nature is to live in the light...that the last word about us...the recreated human...forever recreated, since the beginning...the last word about us is that we are people of life and light...not people acclimated to the dark....and therefore we are emboldened to live like the people of light, and that is to be truly human...At the resurrection of Christ and at every resurrection true humanity is raised to light....and that doesn't mean we don't pay attention to the dark...we do as people of the light....informing it, transforming it, bringing the dark to account....a high calling to be sure...this business of resurrection...this vocation as light bearers...life bearers for the dead...life bearers for those who would hope to live.

And this light has many names, names like kindness and mercy, and justice and forgiveness and sacrifice and healing... but one name to be sure is... dignity....Jesus' crucifixion was as much about shame as it was about death...the manner in which he was killed was meant to shame not just him but all who knew and followed him...the word resurrection literally means in Luke's Gospel...to stand with dignity...dignity, the light of salvation...so we are raised for a purpose....we are raised to give this life to the world...so that all may stand in the light of dignity...until all the tombs of the dead are empty....that we have looked into the abyss and have seen not a corpse but a risen body, unafraid, living in the light with peace and joy amid a just world...and a host of the rest, the risen, unbound from death and set free....and invited to the gracious meal that awaits...a meal whose table glows with the fiery light of heaven....free from the forgetful dark at last...free from darksome death...into the joy of daylight...free to live....at last. Alleluia Christ

is risen.....and we, good people, we are risen as well indeed...and the world will never be the same, because the fear that lies in the dark is forever vanquished.....and the creation is made new and its dawn comes like fire...he is not here, he is alive, just as he told us...remember?