

## Easter Year C

For God himself knows whereof we are made;  
He remembers that we are but dust.  
Our days are like the grass;  
We flourish like a flower of the field;  
When the wind goes over it, it is gone.....  
But the merciful goodness of the Lord endures forever.

In just a few simple and subtle strophes, the poet of Psalm 103 touches the essence of the human condition: That we are mortal; that we wither as the grass; and often that process of withering is painful and grotesque, and often caused by our own doing. It is the human condition that we suffer and die. And as beautiful as that poetry is, and true, it is so very unsatisfactory..... But it is a part of the human condition also that we hold a sacred hope implanted in our DNA, since the evolution of our species, that even after our deaths there is in God's grace a new way ahead.

But I want to suggest this evening that the story of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus isn't so much concerned with the hope of life in the hereafter, instead it is chiefly concerned with resurrection life present today. And it is not so much concerned with our natural sufferings and deaths, but with the unnatural sufferings and deaths in our world besieged by evil....Our story in scripture is first and foremost a story about the abuse of power, the abuse of power, and what God does about it. Our story, from arrest to

crucifixion to Resurrection, is an expose about power gone wrong, and the results from power gone wrong....the mutilated body of Jesus and his gasping lament on the cross, the outward and visible sign....and finally and thanks be to God what God has to say about the human condition and in God's grace, what God does about it.

Jesus, known as the Son of Man, the Son of Humankind in the Gospels....Jesus, hanging on the cross with us, is the lament of humankind for our world to God. Maybe even God's lament to Godself. Jesus the archetype for all who lament to God for the hurt of the world; and not just hurt but shame... all of us bear shame, some more than others; some in fact bear a disproportionate share.... Jesus hanged there to lead the human family in a lament over the world's brokenness and hurt... a lament over its fractured and hardened heart. In grief, we cry as the human family with our brother the Christ into the abyss. We cry out for justice; we cry out for a peaceable world, for mercy, for health, for food and shelter, for help against the powerful who disgrace the powerless. The cries of the disgraced and abused, the crucified of our world; their lament goes into the dark and there they rest, syllable upon syllable, bearing the passion, the soul, of our race...there for a proverbial three days. And the world waits.....there the world waits.

But this night.... good people of God...this night God answers: God answers as God answered Moses from the burning bush....God answers as God answered the groans of the people Israel in the desert of Sinai...God answers as God answered the cries from the captives in Babylon...God answers our lament because God remembers that we are but dust, and because God is a God that gives only, a God who passionately loves us, a God who is GOOD.

From the abyss, the great dark, the great deep, over which God moved in the very beginning of creation, from the abyss, the answer comes to us this day....a voice small but strong... the voice says: He is risen.... He is not here; the tomb is empty. Jesus the Christ and all we in solidarity with the crucified throughout the ages are raised to a new life in our own day....a life where justice stands against injustice....wherein mercy exceeds hard heartedness....wherein peace ends the wayward and ineffective ways of war....where kindness and generosity are our chief virtues.....where we hold each other up in courage for our work together for the good of our world.....I'm describing resurrection life, brothers and sisters...not an abstraction or a pastel once upon a time platitude....but a call here and today to live into the raised life of Christ for the good of our world...because it is the only hope we have...this raised life in Christ....If we don't answer the

call of the resurrection.... That is to live selflessly in sacrificial love the way Christ taught us...then there is no resurrection. God's answer to the cosmic dilemma entire is Love. It is Love that endures all things, and it is the presence of Love in the world that enables us, enables God, to call the world good. The root word in the Greek for resurrection means literally to stand with dignity....to stand knowing one is loved and empowered to sustain a life of love. To live resurrection life means to stand with dignity in solidarity with those who live without it. Resurrection then is not something that happened...but resurrection is something that is ever happening. Khylen LeFlore and countless others around the church this night have been initiated into this life we share, a life in which we will teach him in our actions what this new life means; how to Love is short...and he by his actions of love will teach us as well....Khylen ..good luck.

The tomb of injustice and shame, and fear, and anxiety by two thousand years plus of witnesses, has been declared empty. It is an illusion.... The truth is....Jesus is not there, Jesus is risen, and living among us, and calling us to himself into a life of enlightened and passionate service to a still crucified world. It is Love that is the last word. As people who share the solidarity with Jesus of the Cross, living in a world plagued by

evil; We also are a people of the resurrection that will overcome that evil and shame...and yes in the end, overcome death itself....

From the abyss, the sacred womb of the cosmos, God sends our words of passion and pain; sends our suffering and shame, the suffering and shame of the crucified back to us transformed as new life...a new way ahead....a new way of love that will forever and always burst forth as life giving sacrifice among us. This resurrection is not an end dear people of God...not an end to the story, but a beginning....a call to a life of utter responsibility....to a life of selflessness....to a life of love....to a life that will end at last in joy. Christ is not here in the tomb; Christ is risen....And we are risen as well empowered to bear this life to our world..... He is risen as all things are being raised up....blessed be the merciful goodness of our God.