

After He Made His Bed

I know the story, I love the story, and I believe in the story, yet I cannot begin, not even in my wildest imagination, to envision what happened in that tomb. I know that this is not the only resurrection story in our Bibles. Jesus himself had resurrected several people. Lazarus was raised after four days as well as Jairus' daughter. There are a number of resurrections in the Old Testament performed by the prophets. Even in our day it is not rare to hear of someone who is clinically dead being brought back to life. Yet this is the only one which multitudes sing about. This is the only one with a holiday, a "holy day", to call us to remember and retell.

This resurrection story is different, there is no "other" involved, other than God God's self. No one called Jesus forth; he was loose when the women arrived. Those Jesus raised and all those raised in the Old Testament eventually died again. They were limited resurrections. They were raised to a few more years of life. Those gathered knew instantly that they were who they were. Mary did not recognize Jesus; those on the road did not recognize Jesus. Jesus was alive and Jesus was who he was and yet something more, something else entirely. Jesus did not return to live a few more years or even days of earthy life, he returned to show us that here was something more than earthly life.

The resurrected Jesus did not return to the life and activities he left behind. He no longer walked, talked and rested with his disciplines. Yet he was present in a way that far surpassed his presence before death. The resurrected Jesus would appear, disappear, yet never be completely absent. Those who had known him now knew that his faith, his courage, and his strength were now within them. Those that had run away now walked determinedly in Jesus' name, in the way and will of God that Jesus proclaimed.

Yet this resurrected Jesus was very much of and about everyday ordinary life. The resurrected Jesus was, and is, someone who is capable and yearns to be in deep and growing relationships. As much as the Resurrected Christ is wrapped up in all the mystery of God, he is also someone to talk to, walk with and learn from.

As I've pondered the "Easter Story" this year, I've been struck by the thought that in those moments as life first returned, in those moments when new day and new life was first birthed, Jesus made his bed. He folded those linens which had wrapped his dead body, and the cloth which had covered his breathless, lifeless face.

How deeply this speaks to me of the awareness, concern and love of God in each moment and aspect of life. What a call this carries to be mindful that in even the most ordinary there is opportunity to serve and share.

When I perceive something or someone is insignificant, perhaps something or someone to be disregarded, the care for those grave clothes reminds me that nothing is beyond God's touch, God' love, that all of creations if infused with God given value and worth.

As wonderful as the story is, it is what the story signifies that makes it unique. This resurrection story offers assurance that our past can be forgiven, that we can embrace and experience "new life"; that we can live differently. We can live more fully and less selfishly. That is why we can get up each day, make our beds and give thanks for the opportunities which the new day offers.

This resurrection story declares that we are not left to our own devices in this or any moment. That no matter what we face, our present circumstances can be managed knowing that we are not left to our own devices, but that we care deeply loved by a God who understands all our brokenness. A God who reveals to us all that we need to merge our lives with God's goodness and grace -- a God who calls us into gardens and down roads where we will encounter others whom God loves.

And this is the resurrection story which invites us to live with the knowledge, with the trust, that our future is secure. That in all that will be, and all who are and are to come – that in all that humanity does, out of holiness and out of horribleness, we can rest assured that the final results are in God's control. That nothing can overcome goodness, love and life.

The wonder of life which springs forth from such a God is a reality. It is the current and future reality which the Easter Story illustrates. It is as real as love embraced and beds made. It is the kingdom of God which is both here and now and eternal. The kingdom opened to all. ***It is.***

As we embrace this truth we are lead to the question "what we will do." What we will do with this resurrected Jesus who is loose in our world? How deliberately and fully will we embrace the reality and life which God has provided? What will be the source and purpose of our singing? Will we sing in an attempt chase away darkness and fear, or will our songs proclaim that the light of God has overcome.

Christ is risen! He has made his bed, walked in the garden, down the road and beside the sea. He has called Mary by name, offered his nail scarred hands as assurance in the midst of doubt, forgiven and affirmed Peter. Now it is your name, our name, that God is calling, what shall we do, now that he has made his bed?