

The Resurrection and the Reality

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Inside the Church we are celebrating the season of Eastertide, and the Gospel readings focus on the Lord's post-resurrection appearances. It's a time for rejoicing, for Alleluias and Hope and the triumph of God's Love over death and everything negative.

Yet in our world, in the last two weeks, we have experienced the tragedy at Virginia Tech and the Nor'easter flooding in New England, and everywhere we turn neighbors are sick and children are at risk. The calendar says Spring is here, but in spite of the defiant shorts-wearers the daffodiles haven't bloomed yet.

So, how do we put the resurrection and the reality together?

I believe we can learn something from the students at Virginia Tech. Classes have started again, and we hear repeatedly "we need to be together", "we are family", and "we know who we are!". With dignity they set up memorials sites for candles, flowers and letters to their classmates and one for the shooter; with compassion they speak words of forgiveness for his family and words of love for all parents.

When tragedy strikes, we instinctively reach out to those around us; we need to touch and be touched, to hold on and be held close. In the dark days after the crucifixion, the disciples gathered in fear. They heard the women's declaration of the resurrection with wonder and awe, and were together when the Risen Lord appeared. Thomas was not there, but when he showed up they told him! Even when he questioned what they were telling him, they did not reject him. And again the Lord appeared, and offered Peace and Forgiveness and Unity! Judas was the only one who did not come back to the group after they scattered in the darkness.

We decide not to be isolated. We choose Life! The Good News that Christ has conquered Death is not an abstract conclusion handed down by lofty-thinking theologians in ivory towers somewhere. It is, for us, the core of how we face the world. Now we can cope with sense-less violence and nature's mindless destruction. Because we know that WE ARE NOT ALONE!

The Resurrection is not just God's triumph over Death and Evil. It is also a CALL for us to come together in Peace and Hope and Unity. As Paul says, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Yes, bad things still happen. Yes, we are frightened; for ourselves, for our loved ones, for our world. But in the midst of our fear, the Risen Lord appears in the middle of the gathering, giving us the peace and strength we need to face the world.

We conclude Eastertide with the Day of Pentecost, May 27th. Again, the disciples were together, and the Holy Spirit was given to all! And the church was born. And it continues whenever and wherever disciples touch and are touched, hold on and hold each other close.

May the God of hope go with us every day,
 Filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.
 May the God of justice speed us on our way,
 Bringing light and hope to every land and race.
 Praying, let us work for peace,
 Singing, share our joy with all.
 Working for a world that's new,
 Faithful when we hear Christ's Call.
 - Song of Hope (#432 in our hymnbook)