

Kevin's Korner

What does one write after Easter? Easter says it all. Easter is the culmination of all that God began with the creation of the world, including the Adam and Eve in the garden story, the call of Abraham, Moses leading the people out of slavery and into the new "garden," the Promised Land, the Law, the judges, the prophets; the whole story of our faith and relationship with God all leads up to Easter, "the new beginning." What does one write after Easter?

But look around you. There is more to Easter; in fact, there is Easter everywhere you look. Trees are budding, flowers blooming, grass is growing – except the Bermuda grass, which hasn't noticed that Easter has happened. Where are you seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching Easter?

I asked, in my sermon Sunday morning, "Are you ready for resurrection?" Are you ready for new life to begin? Are you ready to let the old fears, and pains, and problems, and even the successes die and be left behind, but still feed our decision making into the future? Are you ready to let Jesus live again? Oh, yes, and are you ready to let yourself live again; no, to let yourself really live, in a brand-new way? Are you ready for resurrection in your own life?

Actually, it was Richard Rohr, my favorite mystic, who started me asking these questions, with his daily devotion on the Monday after Easter. Rohr invites us to think of Easter in a different way than most of us do. Particularly in the Western world, most people and churches celebrate Jesus' resurrection: "He died, he suffered, he rose from the dead, he ascended and returned to God." We celebrate what God did through Jesus, as if his was the only resurrection happening that day, or this Easter, or today.

"But you know what?" Rohr asks, "I'm quite sure that was not intended as the message! Jesus was not the lone exemplar. Jesus was not the standalone symbol for the pattern of the universe. Resurrection is just the way things work! When we say hallelujah on (this) Easter morning, we're also saying hallelujah to our own lives, to where they're going, to what we believe in, and hope for."

Remember that Easter, that resurrection that is happening all around us, dead leaves mulching into the dirt providing nutrients, feeding roots and stems and leaves and fruit. Soon baby birds will be chirping, caterpillars will become butterflies, my Bermuda grass will actually turn green. "Resurrection is just the way things work!" God created a world of resurrection. Jesus wasn't the first. And his wasn't the only resurrection for us to celebrate as Christians.

The Good News of Jesus' resurrection is, "Reality rolls through cycles of death and resurrection, death and resurrection. In the raising up of Jesus, we're assured that this is the pattern for everything—that we, and anybody who is suffering—is also going to be raised up. This is what God does for a suffering reality. What we crucify, what reality crucifies, God transforms. I don't think it's naive to say hallelujah. We have every reason, especially now, since biology and science are also saying this seems to be the shape of everything. It just keeps changing form, meaning, focus or direction, but nothing totally goes away."

Why is this Good News? "Jesus is the archetype of the shape of the universe (and our lives). To believe in Jesus is to believe that all of this is going somewhere and that God is going to make it so. All we have to do is stay on the train, stay on the wave, trusting that by our crucifixions, we would be allowed to fail, fumble and die, and be transformed by grace and by God."

Our sacred scriptures, the Word of God, is consistent in this message. God, the Redeemer, is redeeming all of creation, including us, into right relationship with Godself and with each other (all of creation!). Resurrection is the end and the beginning of that relationship, that life, with God.

Richard Rohr concludes: "Easter is the great feast of the triumph of universal grace, the triumph of universal salvation, not just the salvation of the body of Jesus. What we're talking about creates a people of hope, and a culture of hope that doesn't slip into cynicism and despair. Easter is saying, we don't need to go there. Love is going to win. Life is going to win. Grace is going to win. Hallelujah!"

Let's keep on shouting, "Hallelujah! Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!" (Right, Violet?)

God Bless You!

Pastor Kevin