

EASTER 2016

Easter- what does the story mean? We can't do that definitively—and I am pretty sure we can't—then at the very least we need to decide what difference any of it makes to us. The way we live our lives depends upon it.

It probably would be easier if Easter were only a day, not a season. If that were the case, we could wrap it up as a one-off event, albeit a glorious one filled with everything we love from people to flowers to music, but in the end just a day. With great wisdom, the church requires us to live in Easter for fifty glorious days, the time between Easter and the Day of Pentecost, inviting us to practice living in the reality of resurrection.

It is not an easy concept, and the struggle with it is not new. The disciples struggled with it. They had to be reassured again and again. The gospel narrators, each of whom eventually had something to say about a post-resurrection experience with Jesus. We will hear and listen to those wonderful narratives during these fifty days of Easter.

The reality of God for us as Christians, depends upon resurrection, the presence of something beyond the grave. Resurrection—perhaps re-imagined, reconsidered—is crucial to the story. Without it, there can be other good and faithful and true stories, but they are not the Christian story. The Christian story depends upon resurrection.

It is time for us to do something with resurrection. I use the words “do something with it” because we have little hope of getting it, explaining it, or even believing it—certainly in any linear way. Such linearity is not the only or even best way of grabbing on to something, because that way of understanding depends upon facts, which are always changing and are always subject to new information. I suggest, the answer, is to give our hearts to the hope of resurrection whereby we may begin to understand anew what it can mean for us to say: “Christ is risen.” Then the acclamation lives in our hearts because it is a living, breathing proposition, not because it is something we are bound to believe.

What would life in Easter look like if we wrote some new post-resurrection stories? Could we do it? What if we liberated ourselves

from trying so hard to believe an ancient story and simply gave ourselves over to what the story still means today? Could it change our lives?

A wonderful Old Testament scholar, Walter Brueggemann in his book, *Sabbath as Resistance: Saying No to the Culture of Now*, without calling it such, describes a life of resurrection, a new reclaiming of an old way of living as though Christ is risen. He rejects the craziness of our culture—and we all know what he is talking about. He argues, living as people who know resurrection in our hearts can never happen, until we free ourselves from several things: the insistent clamor for more and more stuff, the growing belief that there is a technological answer for every human problem, the compulsion to fill every free moment of our time and that of our children with something productive and educational, and the unreflective reliance upon advertising as the source of our next great desire.

Only when we come to live as people who refuse to be shaped by the whim of our culture, can Christ truly be risen for us.

When Christ is risen in our lives, we are more alive, not less. We hurt, we question, we pray, and we do not ignore. The resurrection changes everything; and mostly it changes us.

Blessings,

Fr Geoff