

Easter Sunday-The Resurrection of the Lord
Reflections by Sister Patricia Crowley, OSB
April 21, 2019
Acts 10:34a, 37-43; Col 3: 1-4; John 20: 1-9

Now, I don't know about you, but I know that I sometimes find myself pausing when I think about the reality we celebrate today – pausing, at times, asking myself: *Is this truly “real”?* and *what does it mean for me? For us? For our world?*

In today's Scripture selections, three people seem to ask the question: *Where is Jesus to be found?* A fourth gives us a metaphor to help us answer that question. That, of course, is a central question in our lives as Christians. (cf. Barbara Reid in *Wisdom's Feast*, 2016 William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

So, for a moment here I would like to look at the three people in today's gospel and at Paul's image as clues to answering that question: *Where is Jesus to be found?*

John presents only three people – no guard, no angels....in this part of the story.

First of all, Mary.... She comes in the dark supposedly to be near Jesus even after his death. She comes alone. She sees the stone removed from the tomb. She assumes and.... She runs to tell others that the body is gone. She says “we” do not know where it has been taken. Mary is seeking an answer in the community of followers Perhaps.

Both of the men respond, undoubtedly thinking that what she said could not be true. They, too, see the empty tomb.

The second disciple (presumably John) gets there first, peeks in the tomb, sees the burial cloth but, perhaps respectfully, waits for the other.

Peter comes, enters, and, perhaps as an astute detective seeing details that may be related to the mystery at hand, notices the burial cloth and the cloth that was wrapped around the head “rolled up in a separate place.” Peter perhaps, seeks Jesus in what he has known in their lives together.

The other one (John) goes in, sees and trusts. He believes. He seems to seek Jesus in faith and hope for the future.

And, John says, that they believe what they have seen and*They did not yet understand....that he had to rise from the dead.*

This gospel, indeed, presents a dance of belief!

The first reading, from Acts, presents a much more confident Peter in the house of Cornelius for, in the meantime, he has experienced the presence of the Risen Christ and has begun to understand.

In the second reading, Paul addresses the moral disarray in the community in Corinth, using the image of yeast which leavens the dough saying: *“Clear out the old yeast”* so that you may become a fresh batch of dough...the newness of sincerity and of truth. That image suggests that we are called to begin anew – over and over each day...each moment.

We, too, come to the empty tomb today. We, too, ask the question – “Where is Jesus to be found?”

Of course, the Rule of Benedict guides us well to a response in our daily lives – Jesus Christ is to be found:

- in one another,
- in those who are sick / weak,
- in the stranger,
- in guests, and
- in the abbot or prioress.

As Mary, in the gospel piece, we proclaim the mystery of Resurrection even when we are unsure, even when we come to it in the dark. We seek Resurrection in community.

As John, we believe even when we don’t really understand.

As Peter, we proclaim it with some confidence because we have, in our lives, experienced its reality!

As Paul’s image suggests, we know it is to be something brand new each day of our lives and we need to “clear out the old yeast” so we can experience the freshness of this reality in our lives.

We recognize that in the darkness and confusion of our times, when we often don’t know what to do, we can, as Mary, Peter, the other, and Paul proclaim the Good News of the Resurrection and the reality of Christ in our world today.

John mentions Peter three times (at supper, at the tomb, and on the shore) and always it is in stark contrast. Some writers see Peter as symbolic of the institutional church and John as representing the interior power of the Spirit in our world, in our lives. These are “complementary visions of the same reality,” both of which we are called to embrace. (cf. Bruno Barnhardt in *The Good Wine*, 2008, Wipf and Stack Publishers, Oregon)

Mary, referred to as “Woman” in the Johannine passage that follows, represents, I believe, a call to our Church to recognize women as bearers of the good news in our world and to our Church and to move towards new roles within in that Christian community. Mary calls us to the new possibilities in this moment in time...even when it is dark.

Perhaps Wendell Berry’s words can give us some direction for daily response to this great mystery:

*...every day do something
That won't compute. Love God (the Lord).
Love the world. Work for nothing.
Take all that you have and be poor.
Love someone who does not deserve it....*

*....Be joyful
Though you have considered all the facts...*

The ending of Wendell Berry's poem calls us to:

Practice Resurrection.

We are called to keep imagining the impact of the Resurrection. Remembering it, as Teilhard saw it, *this was a moment that affected the entire cosmos and every human being that ever has existed and ever will exist.*

We rejoice in this moment. We celebrate this day. Let us practice Resurrection. God is doing something new!