

Easter Vigil
April 16, 2022
Gospel of Luke 24:1-12
Fr. Brad

Human beings were given the power to name the creatures of God's wonderful creation and the freedom and power to choose....we have been given the freedom to choose....to say yes or to say no.

We were invited to participate with God in His creation. But the creature with power to name and participate with God and the freedom to say yes....through the influence of the tempter,...said no.

It was a rejection of the great order of creation, a refusal to endorse what the Creator had begun and had said 'was very good'....and so the resistance had begun.

It was a *no* to acknowledging the acceptance of the goodness of limits. They ate of the tree of limits...they wanted more than the power to name all the goods of the earth. They wanted more than to participate with the Creator and yield to God's way. They were an unfinished work in progress at the hands of the Creator and they said, 'thanks but we'll interrupt at this point and take matters into our own hands.'

Instead, they wanted to name evil for themselves.... *they* would decide for themselves what was right and what is wrong and not allow themselves to become informed by the Creator, the one who planned and designed it all, the one who knows absolutely, what is right and what is wrong...what is best for humanity and all creation. They wanted to control it all, even if it meant losing everything they already were.

Thus they had to be removed from the garden into exile....where there was left to them...either despair.... or faith in a journey back.

A journey back would entail that they acknowledge that their decision making was flawed...that they had chosen wrongly....they had failed to choose life...it entailed that they would have to admit they messed up....and come to finally recognize their *vulnerability* and their utter dependence upon their Creator God for life. (They didn't have all the answers after all without input from above they were hooped).

It would mean opening oneself up to a bigger picture, accepting input from the other, in order to grow in awareness of what relationship and love is really all about.

It would mean humbling themselves, acknowledging the severe limitations of this world and of their own way of thinking.

It is why the prophets and John the Baptist spoke of the need for repentance, to change ones ways.

It would mean learning to recognize the tempter's fraudulent ways and avoid them in the future. The wages of sin would be suffering and death.

It would mean admitting that suffering and pain in the world was not God choosing to make them suffer but rather the inevitable consequences of their own free choice to not follow the Creator God who is Life.

The journey back would mean surrendering control back to the Creator. It would mean acknowledging the need for help from above.

But this journey back could only be accomplished by one who could truly lead them...one who knew the way, by one who could be absolutely trustworthy. And it would have to be one who was in solidarity with human suffering so he would know and understand the human condition, one who would listen and thus be listened to because he could identify with their pain.

And it would have to be one who was also of God from above who would have this ability to lead and who knew the way....the way home.

This person who would lead humanity, would be foreshadowed by others throughout the Old Testament.

Thus Abraham learned to place all hope in the promise that God made, to yield to God and obey at the very core of his being.

Moses, armed with nothing more than God's promise, split the sea open offering safe passage for his people.

The psalms of David testify to a God who is faithful and worthy of all human trust in spite of our human failings and unfaithfulness.

The prophets testify to God who continually wants to re-establish covenant with humanity and convey his unconditional love for humanity, a God who warns of the consequences of unfaithfulness but continually extends new invitations into relationship.

What is it about us that compulsively clings to our own ways and resists surrendering to the Will of the One who moves the earth? Why do we cling to other gods, to tainted and twisted principles and precepts?

Sin brought with it propensity for more sin and the pattern of choosing other than God.

With it came compulsiveness, addiction, and other destructive habits, and choices. And humanity struggles with it to this day. Yet despite to consequences of sin and death in this world, its power over humanity has been overcome by the one who shows us the way.

We are baptised into Christ Jesus and were baptized into his death. Being like him through likeness to his death, so shall we be through a like Resurrection. Because of Christ, we are no longer as alone as we think we are. As Bishop Don says in his Easter letter, *'We are invited to dare to trust that the God who raised Jesus from the dead will also walk with us in our times of deepest trouble, and when all seems lost.'*

The risen crucified one says yes to God on our behalf, even in our lostness, even in the death which sin brought on us. He carries us as one of his own to safe land.

His death was death to sin once for all; his life is life for God. May this awareness inspire us to accompany one another in a way that reminds us that none of us are alone in the presence of the Risen Lord.

We celebrate that amazing reality this evening.