

Opening the Word: The great perhaps

- ✘ There are words that change everything. “It’s a boy.” “I will love you forever.” “You have six months to live.”

Such speech takes us out of the flow of everyday experience. It changes our personal history. I have become parent. A beloved man or woman loves me. The death that I knew would come now has a more precise date and time.

“They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they put him” (Jn 20:2). According to Mary Magdalene, Jesus is not only dead, but his body is now stolen, a last indignity against their master.

Yet, perhaps, there remained some hope among the disciples. Peter and John run to the empty tomb. What did they hope to find there? Perhaps, Mary was wrong. Perhaps, the body is still there, simply hidden from sight.

Entering the tomb, they see the garments of Jesus wrapped up, thrown to the side. There is no immediate encounter with the resurrected Lord. There is no vision. Only the hope that something has happened. The death of the Lord, perhaps, may not be the end.

[The Resurrection of the Lord – April 21, 2019](#)

ACTS 10:34A, 37-43

PS 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

COL 3:1-4

OR 1 COR 5:6B-8

JN 20:1-9

We Christians know that this empty tomb is not the end. That’s why we find ourselves at Mass on Easter Sunday, celebrating the Resurrection. That’s why we rejoice in the gift of new

Christians, men and women who now enjoy the fruits of resurrected life with Christ.

“Christ is risen from the dead.” As it turns out, these are the words that really change everything. These are the words that force us to re-read the entirety of the Scriptures. Jesus is the suffering servant become Son of Man. The creation of the world and the covenant with Israel reaches its finale in the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. All along, the world was ordered toward a love – a hope – that none of us could imagine.

This finale, though, is not the end of the show. The drama continues. Jesus Christ remains risen from the dead. His body, still marked with the wounds of love, is now glorified. We hear from Paul: “Do you not know that a little yeast leavens all the dough?” (1 Cor 5:6).

Christ is the yeast that leavens the dough of human history. The very human beings who murdered the Word made flesh are redeemable. Human beings are not ultimately wicked, not finally destructive, not irrevocably sinners. For Jesus is risen. Ultimately, finally and irrevocably risen.

Easter, in this sense, is not just a day for us to remember the Resurrection as we might think about a date 2,000 years in the past. Rather, it is the day that orients all the rest of our days.

If Christ is risen, then everything changes. I can no longer live as one who operates according to an economy of scarcity. I can no longer hold grudges against my neighbor, no matter how enjoyable it might be. I can no longer see race, socio-economic status or political identity as separating me from my fellow men and women.

For Christ is risen. And I must announce this news to the ends of the world. I must proclaim to everyone the good news that death has been trampled by the source of all life, even if

that means that I might share in the redemptive suffering of the Lord.

The resurrected Lord changes everything. He offers to humanity the great perhaps.

The next 50 days of Easter are meant to exercise us to become this perhaps, this hope, for a world hungry for good news.

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