

Easter People

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”

(I Peter 1:3)

Blessed be, we have made it through **Lent, Holy Week, and Easter ~ 2011**. I hope you have found it to be a memorable journey. Maybe, even like a drive through the countryside that challenges you to see **the same old places in new ways**.

Perhaps you have looked **differently** at some parts of **your faith and your life**. Maybe you have experienced **a part of yourself** anew in these months. That is one purpose of going on such a journey. To find new meanings in all the old places.

Communion gives one small example. We do it frequently. **The Lord's Table** is a place that we all know, *(or at least think we know)*. It can become so routine in our minds, so much so, as to be commonplace. At times, almost a “ho-hum” moment that barely scratches our attention. The seasons of our church year try to help us to change, to break through our routines and our boredoms.

I use myself as an example. I was not present for Holy Week communion, but I experienced it anyway. How? Well, I was here at church on the day of **Maundy Thursday**. I looked in the **sanctuary**. Even on that dark rainy afternoon, I noticed that **something was very different**. There were **12 chairs** and **a long table** facing **the altar** at the foot of the cross *(that wasn't where it usually was so it got my attention)*. Then I saw the **black drape on the cross**.

Soon, I realized that many of you would be coming to this place. **This old place, that was somehow a new place**. A place that looked **farther away** and more **timeless** than the last time I was there. In my minds eye, I saw you waiting on each other. **Would you sit at that table, as disciples, twelve at a time?** And I wondered what you would **find, feel, see, touch, taste, and smell**. **How would it affect you?**

Later that same Thursday evening, I was traveling down I-29 approaching Council Bluffs. **I tried to imagine** those of you, at that very hour, gathering in Luverne, Minnesota for communion. **What would it be like for you**, in this old place, that looked different. **Would it welcome you, invite you, draw you to do a**

very old thing in a new way.

I wondered about all the different **thoughts and feelings** that you might bring to that **table that night**. **What did you carry to the foot of the cross with your tired body that evening, as you were met there by the Body of Christ**. Was this a year when you experienced **birth, and death? Confirmation? Graduation? Successes? Failures? Losses? Joys?** Did you think of those things in those moments? What was it like for you to stand there, to sit there, to turn and to leave there? What might you have taken from there that you did not bring, or expect, or even imagine?

Such moments can be powerful. So powerful that we can experience them without actually being present. We sense the power just **hearing** about such a moment from a friend. Or perhaps **listening** to me now, as I **tell** my story. **Yet, I was not there! How can that be?**

Well, welcome to Easter season. Easter is about resurrection. ***“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”***

Easter is about surprise. When we expect the usual, God meets us with the unusual. When we reach for the everyday, we are handed the **amazing** instead.

Easter is about all those blessed things that we cannot hardly imagine – moments when the “usual” becomes “unusual?” When the **ordinary** somehow becomes **extra-ordinary?** Such experiences are often called “**holy moments**.” Times when **we find the “holy”** or maybe more correctly, moments when “**the Holy One**” finds us.”

God finds us with “**new birth**” and “**living hope**” which are gifts from the resurrection of Jesus Christ. All we need to do is to look and see.

**The Lord has written the promise of the resurrection,
not in books alone,
but in every leaf in the spring time.
~ Martin Luther**

Let us be Christ's resurrected people,

**Dan Leininger
Visitation Pastor**