

April 2017 –

“So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.” – Mark 16:8

Neighbors in Christ,

Do you believe in miracles? Do you believe in honest-to-goodness, old-fashioned acts of God? That is a good question to ask as we enter into the Easter Season. By “miracle” I mean those contrary-to-human-possibility events that have no natural explanation. The resurrection of Jesus is that kind of miracle. It is totally unexplainable by any human or natural means. That may be why we tend to not talk about it very much. We are not sure how it happened. The crucifixion we can understand; the resurrection is another matter.

So I ask the question again: Do you believe in miracles? Especially this, do you believe in the greatest miracle of all – the resurrection of Jesus Christ? In case you think you have to answer “yes” just because you happen to be in church, put your mind at ease. If you answer “No” or “I am not sure,” you are in good company. There are lots of people today who are not sure whether they believe it or not. And there were lots of people on the first Easter Sunday who were not sure either.

Do you believe in miracles? Do you believe in the miracle we celebrate on Easter? If you answer “No” or “I am not sure,” then welcome. It is okay to be an honest doubter. If you came that way and want to leave that way, it is okay too. When you are ready, Jesus be there waiting for you.

It is all right to doubt, but do not let your doubts keep you away; faith draws us closer to ask more questions. Come to the empty tomb and see for yourself. When Thomas saw Jesus, he fell at his feet and exclaimed, “My Lord and my God.” (John 20:28) That stands as the greatest testimony given by any of the apostles. It is the climax of John’s gospel. And it comes from the man who had the strongest doubts.

It is a wonderful truth that the greatest doubters often become the strongest believers. And the honest doubts – once resolved – become the bedrock of an unshakeable faith. It has been said that no truth is so strongly believed as that which you once doubted. In the history of the Christian church, the greatest doubters have often become the strongest believers.

That is why the story of Thomas is in the Bible – so that honest doubters might be encouraged to bring their honest doubts to the empty tomb. Thomas did, and his doubts were washed away by the person of Jesus Christ – made alive from the dead.

This is the Easter Season and we have put away our penance, our repentance, and our self-denial and put on the love and shroud of a resurrected Christ. It is a wonderful time to make that choice. It is a great season to stop doubting and start believing.

Beloved, I will see you in worship!

Rev. Erik Karlson  
Pastor, Neighbors in Christ Parish