

Easter Vigil
Wicker Park Lutheran Church
Vicar Sarah Derrick
April 20, 2019

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

“Remain true to the mystery. Pass on the whole story. Do not go back. I am with you now, and I am waiting for you.”

This conclusion of Alla Bozarth-Campbell’s poem *Passover Remembered* (which we looked at last night, as well) holds in it a powerful charge for us on this night—the night we celebrate our Passover with Jesus. This night for us is a night of remembering.

We remember God’s action bringing chaos into order; we remember God delivering God’s people from captivity into freedom; we remember Christ’s passage from death into new life.

“Remain true to the mystery. Pass on the whole story. Do not go back. I am with you now, and I am waiting for you.”

Tonight we gather in the mystery of resurrection. If we don’t fully understand the resurrection, if we can’t quite wrap our head around a physical raising of a lifeless body, we’re not alone. There is something mysterious about Jesus’s body being raised. There is something mysterious about how our own death and resurrection will be. But

we gather in celebration that our God is a God who brings about new life even when we can't quite explain *how*.

We might not know *how* exactly God brought about life in the creation. Or *how* God breathed life into dry bones. Or *how* Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego escaped from the fiery furnace unscathed. We might not know *how* exactly Jesus went from a dead man in a tomb to a resurrected body in Mary's midst (Mary couldn't quite wrap her head around it, either).

Yet when we remember God's history of salvation, we begin to recognize our story, too, is in the mystery. We begin to recognize the *whole story* of God's saving action that has been moving and working since the creation of this world.

And when we tell the *whole* story, we know that just as the story doesn't stop with Jesus's life on earth, or his death, the story doesn't stop with his resurrection either. We know that the story continues, even still.

The story continues in God's unending pursuit of a restored relationship with humanity and all creation. The story continues with the resurrected Christ seeing us, together with Mary, and calling us by name. The story continues with God pulling us in, asking us to "go and tell" the whole story, to participate in sharing the good news of new life when death seemed inescapable. The story continues with the waters of baptism bringing us into new life with Christ. The story continues with bread and wine where we proclaim the mystery of faith: that Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again. The story continues, defying the powers of this world that work against God's persistent rule of justice and righteousness. The story continues, new life continues. Death does not have the final word.

And so tonight, we do not go back. But we press ahead in the resurrection, knowing that the one who has been raised is with us now, and is waiting for us in God's continued story of salvation.

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