



SAINT MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

A Easter Sunday, Matthew 28 1-10

St. Mark's, Little Rock, 4-16-17

Danny Schieffler

I was sitting in a room with 30 other clergy
at the National Cathedral for training
at what used to be the College of Preachers.

The walls in that place were at least hundred years old
dark quarter sawn oak, raised panels
beveled glass windows
some stained glass
and oil paintings of famous bishops and preachers
hanging all over.

The place virtually oozed
dignity and gravitas.

Herb O Driscoll

the famous Anglican preacher
was our teacher for that week.

And I'm not sure what I was expecting from him

Maybe some new discovery

About the Bible

Or something about the gospels that I had never heard before

Or maybe some new method of homiletics

some silver bullet

That we could all use in our preaching.

But what I remember from that week

Was that at one point

He simply asked us

Where do you need Easter ?

This week I revisited that question
And I thought about some of the times when I
or my family have
needed Easter in our lives,
times like when my little brother was on a bicycle and run over by a car.
For along time
there weren't enough tears in the whole world
to exceed my mother's
while at the same time at age 12
I did not how to cry.

Or years later
after much healing
when I began to feel God calling me to a new a vocation
and we laugh about this now.

But when I first told Judy
that I thought God was calling me to leave law practice
and become a priest
She something like this
You better talk to God some more
because I haven't heard the phone ring.

Or three years later
during my first semester in seminary in Sewanee
when once again there were tears--
but this time for homesickness
And one evening at the dinner table
half the family was ready right then and there
to pack up
And go home
to Helena.
While the other half
Wanted to stay

Or other times through the years
When one of our children was struggling or unhappy
Which means mama wasn't happy either
And you know what the rest of that sentence is.

Or other times when life is like a country song
 When there is too much month left
 At the end of the money
And even now today
 In the church
 As people have been predicting demise of the faith
 And we have watched the decline of the church
 For more than thirty years
Once again
 Somedays I wake up on the inside
 as dry as a sun baked bone
 and I realize
 I need God
 I need Easter.
Where do you need Easter ?
 Is it your family?
 Your job, your business?
 Your health
Have you gotten cynical?
 Or perhaps discouraged?
 Is there some stone in your path
 that you have no idea
 how you are going to roll it way?
Yours may be different
 But wherever it is that you need Easter
 I want to suggest to you
 One thing that you can do
 And that is to name it
And especially name it before God in your prayer
 Speak to God in your prayer
 about where you need Easter
About the place where you need help
 About the place you may even feel powerless
 And even if that place feels more like tomb
 Go there

go there in your prayer.
Do what the two Mary's did on that first Easter morning
when though
they were crushed by all that happened
And though they were scared and afraid
Nevertheless
They went there.
With whatever little shred of faith that they had
they went there
even to the tomb
And what they found
Is what millions and millions
of people
have found
ever since.

He's risen, He's alive
God turns tombs into wombs
God raises the dead
And God raises even what is dead in us
And when there does not seem to be a way
God makes a way.

"Do not be afraid," the angel says to Mary
He's not here
He's been raised
Now go quickly and tell his disciples
he has been raised from the dead.
Indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee
There you will see him
And This is my message for you.

And sure enough
As they heeded the angels' message
The women saw
with their own eyes.
They saw him.
And with their own hands,

they touched him
as they fell at his feet
and they worshipped him

And this is my message for you

sin and evil and death are no match for God
and neither are stones.

Because Angels still roll away stones in this world

And God still

turns tombs into wombs

Indeed I heard a woman talking about this several weeks ago.

She was describing childbirth--

the experience of new life

ready to come forth from the womb.

And though God is the one who creates life

the one who does Easter

the one who forgives us

the one who turns tombs into wombs

When new life is read to be born

This woman said

The mother

still has to do something left to do

When the time is right

She has to push.

And when it comes to Easter

So do we

Because For new life to come forth in this world

a world where Easter is surely needed now more than even.

You and I must doing something

Like the women

And like the disciples

we too must go Galilee.

For as much as we may experience Easter in this place

And have communion even with Christ

Easter doesn't end here

Easter begins here

Easter is in Galilee
For it's in Galilee
that we'll see him
In the face of the poor, the sick, the lonely
The stranger, refugee
The despised and rejected of this world
Even In the face of the condemned man
It's in Galilee that we will see him.
And so as much as I need Easter
So many more need Easter too.
And so I pray God
to give us all the courage and the will to go to Galilee
where tombs do become wombs;
That's where Easter is
and so is He!