

THE DIOCESE OF THE NORTHEAST
Anglican Church in America

EASTER MESSAGE

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Easter is the central message of our faith. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the historic and eternal event in the life of our world. It is so crucial to our understanding of who we are, that we cannot truly exist without it. Without the knowledge and understanding of the central fact of the Christian faith, we simply cannot be fully human.

A few days ago, as I drove about on the way to accomplishing several routine errands, I listened to a certain program on the car radio. Garrison Keillor narrates a radio show every weekday morning that is dedicated to writers. He notes the birthdays of any writers born on that day, relates a few biographical anecdotes and closes with a poem. Some of the poems he chooses are well known. Many are not. Whenever I hear Garrison Keillor's program, I usually listen with mild interest. But not on this particular day, the poem he read to end his show got my full attention.

I don't remember the title of the poem or the name of the author. But I remember the story line very well. This narrative poem tells the story of a father, a mother and their two year-old daughter. The poem sets the scene very well. At the beginning of this poem, the little girl waits impatiently for the door to her home to open. She is waiting for a relative she hasn't seen in a long time. We never learn who this particular relative is; it could be a grandparent, an aunt, uncle or cousin. We never learn who it is. But when the door is opened and the relative appears, the child shrieks with joy. Her entire being radiates with happiness and love.

The father, whose voice narrates this little poem, leaves the room; he is so moved by the scene that he weeps. His wife asks him why he is weeping. He says simply: "because she will never be this happy again." In a way, he is correct. Life will intrude on the happy little life of the child he so dearly loves. This father knows, as every parent does, that the many difficult and sorrowful events that every human must endure tempers all of our joys. It is impossible to protect those we love, try as we might, from the difficult moments. But we do learn to cope. We even out over time; it is a mark of maturity to "take the good with the bad."

The father in this poem is one we can all relate to. He is compassionate. He wishes only the best for his child, but knows that there are stern realities she must face.

But perhaps that child who stands at the doorway knows something more profound than what her father knows. Perhaps she knows that, when the door is opened, there will be an outpouring of love that can only be celebrated with all the joy that a tiny human life can offer.

The father in this little poem made it to Good Friday; his child made it all the way to Easter.

Perhaps that is something she can teach him; perhaps that is something she can teach us all.

It is the Easter message that transcends all those peaks and valleys of our tiny human lives. It is the Easter message that helps us beyond the Good Fridays all must endure.

As we approach the holiest time of the year, we, too, stand at a very particular doorway. Because we know the story; because we have learned so much in our lives; because we often pride ourselves on our endurance and our ability to withstand all sorrow, we steel ourselves for the inevitable disaster. It is our story, after all.

But there is another story that we should remember. It is a story of another child, one born long ago. We have grown to know Him and to love Him. We wish to spare Him the suffering we know He will endure. And yet, we cannot. He embraces His own human life so that we may learn something of love, so that we may be drawn to Him.

And as we stand at that doorway on Easter morning, as we begin to realize that He has risen from the dead, we come to know that he will be with us always. And in that moment, we too may feel the unbounded joy that comes from a knowledge and love of God. We, too, may know something of the God that reaches our hearts and embraces us without condition or qualification.

He embraces us because we are His own.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Christ is Risen. The Lord is Risen indeed! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Your Brother in Christ,

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