

TRINITY NEWS

Easter Message 2013



Easter is about the largest space we can imagine. It is larger than all the universes within the Universe, if we may use such language. It is even larger than the universe that we have within us. We sometimes use the expression of someone that they “live in a world of their own”. This may even have been used of some of us! The human universe runs right through us and through the earth and out the other side into infinity. But that is not the largest space of all, though it is one that we have to come to terms with in our lifetime. When we meditate we slip into it, sometimes into freefall.

The largest space of all is what is called “eternal life”. The Greek term for it in the New Testament means “life of endless ages”. It is like such terms as 40 years or 144,000 in the Scriptures which are round terms expressing time and numbers. They are not ‘time’ and they are not ultimate numbers, but they express estimations of time and numbers that have meaning in their context. The nearest that we get in the New Testament to describing eternal life in terms of our references is to call it the alpha and omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. It is like shooting an arrow that has endless flight from an unknown beginning to an unknown end.

Anselm, one of the great minds to be Archbishop of Canterbury, said that God IS someone of whom no greater can be conceived. He supported this with a complex argument that still boggles the mind.

The empty tomb on Easter Day is much larger than a space within a cave. For a moment in time the Spirit of God that hovered over the waters at Creation came to a tomb at Jerusalem and filled it with an unstoppable expansion of spirit that cracked the tomb and transformed the body within. The eternal spirit flowed out through the doors and travelled all the way to the heart of God and back again. This is what Jesus was talking about when he told Mary Magdalene later not to touch him in the garden because he had not yet ascended to the God and Father of us all. The flow of the Eternal Spirit was still happening during his appearances. We have no way of describing this even in our highest flights of language.

Jesus had spent the last three years of his life trying to enact the greatest role of all, that of being the Messiah. If he comprehended that he was the Messiah, and there is clear Scriptural evidence that he did, it must have been difficult for him to comprehend his own death. The Suffering Servant songs in Isaiah that he used in reflecting on his death to come and during his dying may have helped. Messiah was not expected to die. However, Isaiah had left traces in Israel's memory of an expectation of suffering for the One to Come. The anguish of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane may have come from his realisation that he was both the Messiah and that he was going to die. What was incomprehensible was about to happen.

The Eternal Light causes the darkness at the cross because no other light can bear it. The eternal comes into the darkness of a sealed tomb and lets in the early morning light to display its emptiness. Eternal light transfigures the body in the tomb. It had been prefigured in his Transfiguration on a mountain in Galilee.

Resurrection is about a lack of control and total trust. It was so for Jesus of Nazareth the Christ as he breathed his last, and it will be so for us. We base it on the Scriptures, we base it on the best articulations of our Faith, and on the eternal image within us that cries out to be united with God. We cannot describe the Resurrection, but we can listen to its refrains, and sometimes write our own. Resurrection is about the resurrection of the world, the resurrection of life as we know it, the resurrection or lifting up of the human heart beyond its incredible capacity to wound itself, to inflict shame, to destroy reputations, and to call evil good and good evil, something that is insulting even to the great Spirit who bows before us and calls our name. It is about the resurrection of what the Jews called the Nephesh, "ultimate identity", "life in the body", or as Thomas Merton said in another context, "Falling through the soul into God."

THE BROKEN ENCLOSURE

DEEP DEATH STILLNESS CLAMMY COLD IN ROCK
DARKNESS SCREWED IN BY ENCIRCLING STONE
PERFUMED BODY LYING INERT, SWATHED CLOTH
MIND SILENT, SPIRIT SHUT DOWN, BODY ALONE

CREATOR SPIRIT HOVERS ON WATER CUTS STONE
SURGING CREATING IN TOMB ENCLOSURE FILLED
LIGHT SEARCHES DARKNESS FINDS BODY PRONE
WOUND STRIPS UNWIND FALL AWAY EXTRACTED

BODY ENLIVENS, CONSCIOUSNESS, AWAKENING
LIFE QUIVERS STRETCHES LIFTS STANDS WONDERS
MOVEMENT, ENCLOSED SPIRIT EXPLODES WITHIN
UNIVERSAL HUMAN RESURRECTED SEAL SUNDERED

Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

Wednesday, April 3.

- Group Discussion: “The Law of the Garbage Truck”, 7:30pm, Parish Office.

Thursday, April 4:

- Midweek Eucharist, 10am, Chapel.

NEXT WEEK’S READINGS:

Acts 5:12a, 17-22,25-29

Psalm 111

Revelation 1:9-19

John 20:19-31