

Rainbows and Resurrection.

Blessings, friends, during this Holy Week.

In some ways this Lenten, and now Easter, season have been strange. We feel cheated. We miss being together. I miss you. However, I can't help but feel that this year has given us perhaps the most relevant holy season of our lives. Lent is a time of sacrifice and spiritual spring cleaning. It is a time to reflect, refocus, rest, and recharge. A time to pray and connect. To decide what is most important to us... for our own lives, for our communities and global family, for our world. A time of discernment and discovery.

The past few weeks have given us the opportunity to do that. Perhaps more so than if our life had been rushing along at its normal pace. This time has been – and will continue to be – scary, frustrating, annoying, devastating, and at times even kinda fun. We have connected in new ways, found creative ways to be there for others, and made sacrifices to commit ourselves to making decisions that help the larger community. And many people, those on the front lines, have made significant sacrifices for us. It has been a time for us to look at the choices we make and decide what is most important. So I don't think we have missed Lent... I think, together, we have lived it in a big way.

Wednesday evening our Jewish sisters and brothers celebrate Passover, a holiday rooted in the Exodus story. It is a celebration of liberation and hope. Times were scary, and the journey was going to be long, but God would be with them. And so during the seder they sing... dayeinu. (It's also in our hymn book, #137) It's the Hebrew word "enough". If our God had simply saved us... dayeinu... that would have been enough. If God had just brought us safely through the Red Sea... that would have been enough. Or fed us or protected us... Enough. Dayeinu. But God continues over and over again to bless us. So, how can we keep from living gratitude. Therefore, while our friends worship and celebrate together, let's also pray our gratitude. Through it all, God continues to surprise us with blessings.

Then Maundy Thursday. It's from the Latin "mandatum"... commandment. It remembers the night Jesus sat with his friends, his family, his community and shared a meal (probably the Passover seder), during which he broke bread and passed a cup, which became the basis for our sacrament of communion. Before the meal began, he washed his disciples' feet, and gave them a new commandment (hence Maundy Thursday). Love one another. While we may not be washing anyone's feet this week, continue to find ways to rediscover the strength of humility and love. Love has you are loved.

Friday, Good Friday. Take some time to read the story. Matthew 26:17 to the end. Mark 14 on. Luke begin at chapter 22. And in John start at chapter 18.

Then, on Sunday, let life in. Know that you are loved. And know that life wins. This is the day that defines who we are. We are an Easter people. We believe that the worst that we can do to each other, the worst that can happen to us, is no match for God's love. Through everything, life wins.

It has been so inspiring to see the rainbows that people have placed in their windows. Mostly beautiful drawings by children. Signs of hope to share with the whole community. They are not only appearing in our own neighbourhoods, but all around the world. We usually think of rainbows as being cute, right up there with unicorns. But they are a very powerful statement. We know it comes from the Noah story in Genesis, a sign of hope after the flood. But when we hear God say that God will hang a bow in the sky, think of a bow and arrow. A weapon. God says no to violence and destruction. There must be another way. And we're told in the story that this bow isn't just a sign of promise for us, it's a reminder to God. There is another way. A relationship. A way to be. Together. These rainbows that kids are hanging remind us that even in these difficult times, we remain committed to being together. To supporting one another. And it won't always be easy, but it is what we need to do. Because life will win.

We may not have family gatherings this weekend, but we still have each other. And we will do everything we can to weather the fear and frustration, knowing that life wins. Easter is more than just a holiday. It's who we are. We are an Easter people.

I wish you rainbows and resurrection. You are loved. You are strong. You are not alone.

Peace.

Rev. Steve