

April 5, 2015

Easter

Do not be amazed, he is not here. He is going before you as he told you.

The resurrection is as if God is continually breaking off a piece of himself and sharing that self with the rest of us

Brian McLaren is a prominent Christian pastor who has been described as one of the most influential Christian leaders in America. He says:

“For too long, Christianity has been seen as an evacuation plan, calling people to man the life boats and abandon the sinking Titanic. But if we see Jesus as entering the world to bring healing and hope, then we need to join him in his rising and enter with him into humanity's pain and suffering, bringing God's amazing resources to bear on the salvation of all creation. Resurrection is a gift which raises up what we crucify.”

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My Jesuit brother, Fr. Gary Smith, did much of his priestly work on the streets of Portland. He would go up into the old hotels and help the men who needed it. He also ran a day-time drop-in center in down town Tacoma, called Nativity House. He wrote a book on his experiences there called “Street Journal.” The following is one of his entries:

“Thursday, November 16th, 1989. I awoke to National Public Radio this morning with the news that six Jesuits and their cook and daughter were murdered in El Salvador last night. All were connected with the University of Central America in San Salvador, all working in the turbulent world of social justice and the rights of the poor. They were the intellectual heart of the Salvadoran Church and leaders for change and reform in the tortured world of central America. This news - this heart-breaking news - has simply frozen me all day.

“At Mass later on, a Jesuit novice, Terry, who has been working with us for a few months, broke down and wept uncontrollably. Rollin, a dark-eyed black-bearded man off the streets who comes every Thursday morning for Mass, was seated next to Terry on the rug. He reached over and took the Jesuit into his arms. They did not know each other, but Rollin, no stranger to suffering in his young life, spontaneously made his move toward Terry with the sensitivity and compassion born of an individual who knew pain. It did not end with Terry either, for later on he consoled some of the rest of us who were struggling with the grief of it all. It was as if Rollin was breaking off a piece of himself and sharing that self with the rest of us today. He was really the celebrant of the Eucharist this morning. He was the Christ walking the streets, raising up what we have crucified.”

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Is there a better celebration of the Risen Christ than what was described in the
National Catholic Reporter, March 24, 2015:

“Entering the cathedral, Pope Francis' white cassock and his arms were yanked repeatedly by priests, seminarians and nuns wanting to touch him or attract his attention. Calm reigned briefly after the pope reached the altar, but then Cardinal Sepe told the pope that, in accordance with canon law, he had given formal permission for the nuns in Naples' seven cloistered convents to go out for the day. The nuns, who had been seated in the sanctuary, broke free, running to the pope, surrounding him, hugging him, kissing his ring and piling gifts on his lap. ‘Sisters, sisters, not now, later!’ the cardinal shouted over the microphone to no avail. ‘Look what I have done,’ he said, exasperated. ‘And these are the cloistered ones, imagine what the non-cloistered ones are like! Aye. They're going to eat him alive.’”

Now that's what I call God breaking off a piece of God's self and sharing that self with the rest of us.

Do not be amazed, he is not here. He is going before you as he told you.

Upon you the Lord shines. Raise your eyes and look about. You shall be radiant at what you see, and your heart shall throb and overflow.

Happy Easter, Everyone!