

Easter Day, Year C

- “I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight.”
- We can’t say that God didn’t warn us, right?
- After today, our lives are not meant to be the same – after today, **we** are not meant to be the same
- Our lives are meant to be illuminated by the light of the Resurrection
- Our lives are meant to bring that light out into the world
- And sometimes we do, sometimes we succeed in bringing that light – like Mary Magdalene did in preaching the Resurrection to the other disciples
- Because sometimes, like Mary Magdalene, we get a clear vision of our Crucified and Risen Lord, we see that Christ is risen – sometimes, like her, it even comes mere moments after mourning
- Sometimes the Resurrection is utterly obvious, perfectly clear – sometimes it’s easy to see
- We had a great example of this set out for us in stone earlier this week, when the Cathedral of Notre Dame went up in flames, and it seemed like the whole world stopped, and stood still, and watched, and mourned the loss of that nearly universal landmark
- And yet, despite the height of the flames, despite the quickness with which the fire spread – once the flames were extinguished by the Paris fire brigade, the cathedral still stood
- Smouldering, yes, and missing its spire – but still standing
- And images of the nave and the sanctuary spread on social media almost as quickly as the fire had – especially the one that showed the altar, with the cross still hanging above it, glowing bright amidst the dull smoke and ashes – as if to shout to the world, “The Lord is risen indeed!”
- And if there were even a doubt, later word trickled out that even the 13th century rose windows and even the 18th century grand organ were spared damage by the flames which seemed at one point to be everywhere in the cathedral.
- Sometimes God shows up so obviously, so conspicuously, that our despair is turned to blazing joy
- But then sometimes, it isn’t like that – sometimes, it isn’t quite so obvious – sometimes we have to look a little harder
- Because sometimes, like Peter and the beloved disciple, all we see are empty linen

wrappings, and the absence of a body in the tomb

- Clues that we don't understand, can't quite piece together, or that we don't notice for what they really are: a sign of the resurrection
- And if we aren't paying close attention or aren't looking for it, then it's all too easy to just go on about our business, back to whatever it is we were doing, like Peter and the beloved disciple did
- Like a lot of the world has about three historically black churches – St. Mary, Greater Union, and Mount Pleasant Baptists Churches – in St. Landry Parish, Louisiana that were burned down by a hate-filled arsonist over the past few weeks
- They weren't massive churches like Notre Dame, didn't get near as much attention, near as much press
- And so when they started a crowdfunding page asking for \$1.8 million to rebuild, it seemed for a few days that they might not get there – even though it was a hate crime that led to the loss of these three church buildings, these three sanctuaries which are meant to stand as beacons to the world of the presence of God
- For a few days, it seemed like they would get some of the money they needed to rebuild, but not nearly all
- But then, the right people got wind of it, managed to put the pieces together, and say in the wake of what they'd seen at Notre Dame, in the light of the Resurrection as evidenced in that great cathedral still standing – and they said, let's make that promise of Resurrection true somewhere else, too
- And that's how, in just a shade over a week, those churches in St. Landry Parish have already raised over \$2M – more than their goal – more than they imagined would or could happen in small town Louisiana.
- “The Lord is risen indeed.”
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- These stories are what our lives are meant to be – because Christ is risen – not just once a couple thousand years ago, but here, today, Christ is risen – and we are given new life along with Him, because of Him
- We need to tell these stories of Resurrection, to **live** these stories of Resurrection – the obvious, undeniable stories like a cathedral seeming to turn into a pillar of flame, yet somehow not getting hot enough for the lead holding the stained glass in place to lose its form and drop a single piece

- And the stories that need to be pieced together, the ones that can just look like linen wrappings – like enough people deciding to bring God’s love and new birth to three rural churches who might have thought Resurrection wasn’t possible there, or for them
- We are Easter people– called to tell these stories, and in so doing to make the Resurrection true for those we encounter – to make the Resurrection clear to the world, for the sake of the world
- God is creating new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.
- The tomb is empty.
- The Lord is risen indeed.