

Easter Sunday 2017

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- ✘ For those that missed the three days of Holy Week, the Triduum, our stained glass windows tell the story.
 - ✓ Stained glass has always been used in history to tell the story of the OT and NT
 - Particularly to those who couldn't read
 - The most famous being the stained glass windows of **Sainte-Chapelle** (French **Holy Chapel**; Residence of the kings of France until the 14th c.. 30 ft high.
- ✘ The baseline:
 - ✓ Jesus and his disciples crossing the Sea of Galilee
 - ✓ The water referring to the waters that God held back at creation when he created the land as the safe place between the waters above and below
 - In the Jewish mind, large bodies of water referred to the time of the flood; large bodies of water were treacherous, uncontrollable, and only obeyed God. (see the Flood, Exodus, Joshua, etc.)
 - ✓ For this we have symbols of anchors;
 - Medieval stonemasons: "the anchors, which are emblematical of that sacred anchor which will safely moor us in a peaceful harbor where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."
- ✘ Maundy Thursday
 - ✓ Passover meal:
 - Unleavened bread; wine; standing!
 - ✓ "I give you a new commandment, that you should love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."
 - That is The Way:
 - Not to master but to serve
 - Not to kill, but to die
 - Not to dominate, but to forgive
 - Not to stone the adulterous woman to death, as she deserved, but to demand that the one who is without sin to cast the first stone

- Not to demand that the tax collector Zacchaeus (up in the tree) turn his life around and accept Jesus as his Lord and Savior before Jesus would step into his house. But rather to accept Zacchaeus, without pre-conditions.
- ✘ Good Friday
 - ✓ Where we find (in the border) the usual symbols of the passion story: hammer; three spikes; threw lots to see who would win his garment; sour wine on a sponge; the ladder to take him down from the cross; purple robe that was mockingly placed on him at his trial; (Mary and John (who were there, in John's Gospel; whereas in Matthew/Mark/Luke, the disciples and women are at a distance)
- ✘ What's missing:
 - ✓ Where's the Skull?
 - In many stained glass icons in Europe you'll often find a skull at the base of the cross
 - Indeed, the place where Jesus was crucified was named "Golgotha," or place of the skull.
 - A bit of common European folklore held that the place where Adam died and was buried in the Garden of Eden later became the hill where Christ was crucified.
 - Not only that, the legend holds that Cross on which Jesus was crucified was actually made from the wood of the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden (therefore, presumably, the cross was made from an apple tree, if you think the fruit Adam and Eve ate was an apple).
 - So the skull at the base of the cross represents the skull of Adam.
 - Paul makes the parallel in 1 Corinthians: "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."
 - Jesus reversed the Fall of Adam and Eve
 - The redemption gives humanity a new start...so it's appropriate to pair Jesus with the old Adam, even if the legend is entirely spurious.
- ✘ But there is a certain other peculiarity to this crucifixion scene: the face of Jesus
 - ✓ Jesus has two faces:
 - The one on the left; the eye looks upward: it's hopeful; it is fixed on the next world; the mouth on the left is smiling. It's all good.
 - The one on the right; the eye is looks out at the world; the mouth is certainly not smiling.
 - On the left, his body is pierced (to prove that he was dead), but clearly he isn't.

- ✘ This two-sided face of Jesus fully realizes the suffering and fear in this world, but holds it in context of the next.
- ✘ Jesus on this cross is fixed between those two worlds, the herein and the hereafter;
 - ✓ This cross certainly occupies the thinnest of places between heaven and earth
 - ✓ And Jesus lives in both worlds at the same time.
 - And we get an inkling of that during Holy Week, which is deeply rooted in the things of this world (the Maundy Thursday meal, the objects in the Stations of the Cross) but is, at the same time, also focused on the next.
- ✘ Resurrection
 - ✓ Jesus clothed as a priest
 - Perhaps referring to Paul's Letter to the Hebrews: "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek."
 - ✓ Gospels don't tell us what clothing Jesus wore: but the Gospel of John and Luke focus on what he didn't wear: the winding cloths
- The Gospel writers point us to this physical reality by their mentioning the curious detail of the burial cloths.
 - John and Luke are both seemingly obsessed with the burial cloths
 - In John: After the women told their story of the stone that had been removed, Peter and John ran to the tomb, and Peter "saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself." And after Peter and "the other disciple who Jesus loved" saw this, they believed.
 - In Luke: But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.
 - For these two gospel writers the presence of the burial cloths in the tomb was the key piece of evidence that Jesus had been resurrected from the dead. Why is that?
 - On a mundane level: If anyone were going to move the body, they would have kept it wrapped up.
 - First of all, an unsecured corpse would have been extremely difficult to move

- Secondly, who would pick up a body with all the offensive effluvia arising from it that had yet to be treated with burial spices
- More significantly, The disciples understood that that discarded burial sheets were proof of the resurrection.
 - The man who was laid to rest in these winding sheets needed them no more.
- They saw this and believed, although they did not understand how this could be true. ...This event was contrary to what was understood about the resurrection by many 1st century Jews.
- We heard about this common understanding in the dialogue a couple of weeks ago between Martha and Jesus, just before Jesus raises Lazarus from the tomb.
 - Jesus says to Martha: “Your brother will rise again.”
 - Martha replies to Jesus: “I know that he will rise again at the resurrection at the last day.”
- Martha’s understanding of the resurrection was the one shared by many 1st-Century Jews: this would be an event that would happen to all the righteous people at the end of time, and not to one individual in the middle of history.
 - And this is, perhaps, why Luke reports that Peter went home, amazed at what had happened.

The Transformation

- For Peter, the resurrection of Jesus was something more than an event that would happen at the end of time,
 - The Resurrection, happening in the middle of history, changed everything...on that first day of the week in Jerusalem...It changes everything, right now. Today
- Jesus reveals that death is no longer something that we should fear.
 - Jesus says again and again in each resurrection account, “Peace. Do not be afraid.”
- This is the night when Christ destroyed the fear of death; he also destroyed a range of other fears as well.
 - Because we no longer have reason to fear,

- We understand that we lose nothing and we are truly liberated from our fears when we “seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves.”
- We understand that we lose nothing and are truly liberated from our fears. when we strive for justice and peace all people and respect the dignity of every human being.”
- And with this this understanding, we come to realize that Jesus revealed the resurrection in every one of his deeds during his time on earth,
 - And this is the Good News that we, his disciples, must proclaim
 - “Rejoice now, for darkness has been vanquished by our Eternal King!”