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A COVID-19 Easter

Apr 3, 2020 | Arkansas United Methodist



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Jesus' resurrection from the dead literally turned the world upside down. Death was defeated. Evil was left powerless. And despair was replaced with hope.

What happened 2,000 years ago is not merely a theological construct, some sort of living metaphor or an archetype that describes the human condition. What happened was literally real. Jesus was killed by religious and political powers that were threatened by him. He was buried. And everyone opposed to him, as well as those closest to him, assumed the Jesus chapter was finished.

But God was not finished. In fact, God was just beginning. God raised Jesus from the dead – the same yet different, different yet the same. Death was defeated, evil was defeated and despair was defeated once and for all because God's transformative power was able to take what was meant for evil and turn it into good.

If you're like me, you have no problem celebrating what God did in raising Jesus from death to victory. But you struggle when it comes to that once and for all part because you're just not sure it applies to you. You would like it to – and Lord knows you do everything possible to convince yourself that it does – but you too often end up concluding that it's only true for others.

Easter victory, Easter hope and Easter living are a gift from the risen Christ to you. That's right – you. You don't have to be perfect, attain a certain level of religiosity or constantly prove that you're worthy of it. You simply need to trust that is Christ's gift to you.

What happens at Easter is crucial in any moment of your life. It is especially crucial in this moment of your life when you need Jesus' turning everything upside down resurrection reality to enter right smack dab in the middle of your life that has been turned upside down by the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, you need to experience how Jesus' resurrection victory, resurrection hope and resurrection living are not confined to those times when everything is good, but are at their most powerful when everything is falling apart.

I know this may be a difficult Easter because you will not be able to worship in the sanctuary that means so much to you with the people who mean so much to you. But this difficulty also provides you with the wonderful opportunity to experience how the reality of Jesus' resurrection transcends time and space so powerfully that you will be able to celebrate as you've never celebrated before even as everything in your life has been turned upside down.

In other words, the greater the struggle, the deeper the tragedy, the more disrupted your life is – the more you can experience how Jesus' resurrection brings you right into the middle of what God is doing up close and personal. I believe this so strongly that I will be praying every day during Holy Week that your COVID-19 Easter will be the most transformative Easter you have ever celebrated in your life.

Come, Holy Spirit, come!