

Third week of Easter, RCL Yr.B
April 21/22, 2012
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Maybe you experienced it with a second chance at love. Maybe it was a new business venture that brought it for you. Maybe you felt like new life was yours when you finally cleaned out a house that was overwhelming you with stuff. I am confident that we have all had moments of real resurrection in our life, when things that were old have been made new, things that were overwhelming seem manageable, maybe the resurrection was simply coming to terms with the changes that have come your way invited or not.

Resurrection was not new to the disciples of Jesus. They had seen Jesus bring Lazarus back to life. They had been with him when he told Jairus' daughter to rise from the dead. They had all, in one fashion or another, left an old life behind to follow Jesus and that had brought them new life.

These days after the crucifixion and the empty tomb and the appearances of Jesus these followers must have been filled with all kinds of emotions; fear, joy, anxiety, and lack of direction.

Jesus appears to them many times over 40 days. These are the stories we read during the season of Easter. As we are reading of these encounters with the risen Lord I have noticed that Jesus never gives the disciples a how to book. He seems to know that what they are missing most in their lives is a sense of God's peace. At each encounter we have read in these first 3 weeks of Easter Jesus has greeted his friends with just such a greeting, 'peace be with you.'

Peace from God is such a gift. Peace from God can lighten any burden. God's peace can help you to see more clearly. God's peace can straighten out what is crooked. But 'peace' does not always come easy and Jesus knew this too. Sin hovers close at the door. The sins of greed, envy, needing to forgive or be forgiven all such forms of sin that can easily block your sight and sense of peace.

So how do we seek and find this peace that Jesus so freely offers? How do we stay clear of those things, those desires, those people which disguises the peace of God in worldly things?

I know a teacher who used potatoes to help his students find their way. He brought lots of good ole potatoes to class. He asked his students to think about people they were having a hard time with; people they have not been able to forgive, people they think have done them wrong, people they envy or hold jealousy. For each of these people he asked them to carve their name in a potato.

Now the class assignment was to carry these potatoes around with them for the next week. For some this meant an extra 5 or 10 pounds to the already heavy book bag. They complained of the burden of the extra weight. Their teacher just smiled and reminded the students to think about what those potatoes represented. After a few days the potatoes began to smell a bit as the carving had hastened the rotting process. The grumbling among the students grew with each rotten potato.

The moment had come. They gathered together to unpack the potatoes and unpack their thoughts about this little assignment. The teacher asked them, "What will it cost you to empty your bag of

these rotten potatoes?" Nothing the students determined. They were definitely ready to be free of the weight, the smell and the burden.

So what would it cost you to let go of the burdens the potatoes represent? Those burdens, whether you realize it or not, weigh you down much like that sack of potatoes. Those burdens begin to affect you and others around you who must endure the smell of such sin. Let those burdens go, forgive others, live life simply, give generously of yourself to the world. Then that gift of peace, I promise you, will be planted in you for all the world to see.