



Church

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CHAT

Lessons To Be Learned From The EASTER SEASON

Post-Resurrection times found the disciples of Jesus very confused, lonely, frightened disappointed and maybe even a little angry. Scripture speaks of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and we sensed these very emotions as they made their way out of Jerusalem. These feelings changed, however, after they met Jesus, listened to the Scriptures and shared a sacred meal with Him. It changed them so much that they did an "about face," headed back to troubled Jerusalem, and we suspect, in search for the community of believers who remained.

Fast forward to our times. Do we not find ourselves adrift in our lives, our Church? How often are we confused, lonely, frightened, disappointed and even angry. Are there lessons to be learned from our Easter Season liturgy?

Ronald Rolheiser, in *"The Restless Heart"* puts it this way: "In our analysis of human loneliness we see that according to a Christian understanding of it, loneliness can only be partially resolved while we are here on earth. This side of eternity we are merely pilgrims journeying toward that which can fulfill the infinite concerns of our hearts and minds, namely, an all-in-one-flesh community of life with God and each other. Only when we are fully part of this community of life will we be fully unlonely.

However, this togetherness in a community of life is already partially a



reality. As members of the Body of Christ, we are already in that community. Through faith and hope we are already in community of life with God, and through charity we are already in community of life with each other. To the extent that we are already participating in this community of life, we are already moving toward and achieving the final solution for our loneliness.

For the Christian, this points to the importance not only of a life of faith, and charity, but also to the importance of explicit church membership, especially to the importance of gathering with each other in community, around God's word and Christ's banquet table. It is here, when we are gathered with each other around God's Word and table, that we begin in a radical way to build that "all-in-one flesh unity that will take all our loneliness away."

In *"And Morning Came,"* Megan McKenna writes with the consistent practice, the daily devotion of forgiveness and the work of reconciliation as

core to all our lives, all our vocations and relationships. And the second concept and power flows from forgiveness: it is the making of peace, the sharing of the peace of Christ. We are heralded as the children of God and blessed because we are God's peacemakers upon the earth, among all peoples. This is where individual practice must essentially become communal practice and witness within and outside of the confines of church and community."

She continues by saying that there are "three concepts and practices core to resurrection belief and living: forgiveness, peace and lastly the cross or non-violent resistance to evil. Jesus in the upper room proclaims peace with His words and then show His disciples His hands and His side: His wounds from the struggle to be forgiving and to be peace, resisting violence in His very person, His body, refusing to be violent and standing with loving resistance in the power of the Spirit, with His Father behind Him, resisting even unto death. Again, this is not primarily practice as individual belief, but as community standing together at the altar of sacrifice and feast, and then standing together before injustice."

Finally Megan puts it this way: "As individual believers, as families and parishes, it must begin close to home and radiate out from the centres of our liturgies, prayer and relationships. We must practice devotedly the virtues of forgiveness and reconciliation,

peacemaking and non-violent resistance to evil and sin as expressions of our baptismal promises. It is essential if we are to live and practice resurrection life now, here, as a way of worship and belief . . . This is what the power of the Spirit was given to us for and what it means to witness with our lives to the gospel of resurrection and good news to the poor."

In the last chapter of her book, Megan McKenna gives a list of some things we could do to be helpful in our world today:

- wash the feet of those who may not walk tomorrow
- stand with the victim, the outsider, the left out, those different
- resist despair
- bend the knees of your heart daily in conversion
- learn to kneel and beg on behalf of others' lives and need
- pray for your enemies and the enemies of your nation and ask forgiveness for them
- think universally (the one, holy, catholic, universal church) and act locally and globally, join groups that seek to make peace
- devise new and communal ways of being holy today in this world of violence
- live simply, abhor greed, trust other people, and live a life worthy of mutual trust; share as much as you can, live with as little as you can and be grateful
- resist sin with all your heart and soul and mind and strength (resources)
- act with others as much as you can
- if you feel like you can't do anything, stand there, pray, and resist with your soul force
- live with invincible gentleness

And as we go out of loneliness and confusion, with others, in community "back to Jerusalem." *Shalom!*



Our Prayer

Gracious and ever loving God,
you make us into your holy people
and call us to be the body of Christ.

Ope us to hear and know you
in the stories of faith
found in the sacred scriptures
and in the lives of the faithful
present in this community.

Open our eyes to recognize you
each day as we carry forth
your mission to the world.

Feed us and nourish us
so that we may go out
and witness to your saving act
in this world so in need of Good News.

Amen.