

**All Saints Anglican (Episcopal) Church**

**Steenrijk**

**Leidenstraat at Heelsumstratt**

**Willemstad, Curacao**

**The Episcopal Diocese of Venezuela**

**Easter Sunday (C)**

**April 17, 2022**

**DRAFT**

**“Why do we look for the living among the  
dead”**

**A Sermon by the Rev. Joe Parrish**

**The Holy Gospel according to Luke 24:1-12**

On the first day of the week, at early dawn,  
they came to the tomb, taking the spices that

they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene,

Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. 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.

We pray for peace in Europe, that Russia and the Ukraine can coexist without War - Amen and Amen. Hear our prayers, Dear Lord.

There are many things about God that we humans will never be able to understand. One of which is patience. We want things when we want them, and we want them now. God seems to say, “Hold on, you want what your want, that’s one thing, and then you also want them now. And maybe God asks, “Which prayer do you want first – the “now” prayer, or the “we want” prayer. No, no, we reply, “we want what we want, and we want it now.” And probably then God wrings God’s hands and wonders if we will ever grow up. Those words were what we uttered when we were about one year old, but we seem to have made little progress in the interim thirty or eighty or so years.

God seems to work things out for us, but in realistic terms and in realistic ways, that to us probably seem very mysterious if not magical. But as scripture says, “God’s ways are not our ways.” [Isaiah 55:8-9] God’s ways are far higher than our ways. As one commentator has noted, “God knows the end from the beginning, while we see just a short part of the now.”

<https://bible.org/seriespage/6-god-s-ways-are-not-our-ways>

For example, whatever picture we have of ourselves, it is not totally accurate, not because of the picture resolution or the lighting, but because it is a picture of what we looked like a minute or a month or years ago. And we

particularly preserve the pictures we like of ourselves. But we are always changing, yet God never changes; God is always and always shall be, God. God is our rock. God is our anchor. God is our refuge in time of trouble. So, we praise God for Who God Is, the infinite God, the almighty God, the God of Wonders, the God of life.

Never before or after has a person risen from the dead three days after dying. Dead is dead, except for God, who likely thinks of death as just another one of those annoying things that somehow got woven into our genetic makeup. But tyrants come and tyrants go, thanks be to

God. But good people too come and good people go. But in the end, God always prevails.

A Christian friend writes this week: “One spring morning many years ago, I was at the breakfast table sipping my coffee as my then-young son munched his cereal in his highchair. I opened the paper to see that a local judge, a woman, had died the day before, after a long and painful battle with cancer. Instinctively, I moaned, “oh”, and my son looked up to inquire, “What wrong, daddy?” As best I remember, I think I tried to explain to him how daddy knew this lady who had been very sick, and died, and had gone to heaven, but daddy was still sad because he would miss his friend. Mainly, what

I recall is muttering some miserable mess trying to clarify to a child something no adult can truly understand.

Even so, my 4-year-old took all this in and seemed to be satisfied and took another scoop of his cereal. After a few seconds, though, he looked up and asked, ‘Daddy, does she feel better?’ In an instant, my muddled confusion was wiped away and replaced with an absolute rock-solid answer I could give him with unquestioned certainty (albeit now with a flushed face and choked voice): ‘Yeah big guy... She feels better.’”

Does death relieve pain. Yes, of course, we reply. Death relieves that particular person of pain, but we who are left behind find death does not necessarily relieve the pain of those who are mourning the loss of someone we love, sometimes mourning the death of even someone we barely knew. Death is so unexpected, so harsh, so unforgiving, how could it not leave scars for the ones left behind. Their wounds become our scars. Their suffering become our suffering. And those left behind by Jesus' crucifixion felt their loss very profoundly. But death was death, the final loss, the final end.... Or was it?

I listened to a young doctor at a medical conference a few years ago who said his specialty was pediatric oncology: he took care of children with cancer. Someone in the audience asked him about the statistics of survival in his cohort of children, and he said, ‘about twenty percent’. We were all in dismay. Scientists had developed so many new drugs and treatments, and yet, for these young children, over eighty percent did not survive. Many questions passed through my mind, one of which was how could this doctor carry on with such an overwhelming loss of life. It finally came to me that he was living and serving not only the eighty percent who would not make it

no matter his great healing skills, but he was also caring for the twenty percent who would be survivors. He was trying to mute the trauma of having so many medicines, so much pain, so many treatments, and yet coming out the other side healed and whole again.

I was debilitated as a child from three years old until I was thirteen with severe asthma. I recently saw a picture of myself at age six, smiling and pushing the stroller of my newly born brother, who passed away recently from covid. I looked like an Auschwitz victim, gaunt, extremely thin, but smiling because I had gotten a healthy new little brother. New life does that to us; new life brings hope and

healing. And although I suffered many more years before my healing, I was suffering with a younger brother whom I loved dearly, even though we would have our spats from time to time. His health gave me hope that one day I would also be healthy. Life does that. Life gives hope. And of course, I did eventually find complete healing. But in the interim, I can recall many memories of being miserable, unable to breathe, unable to walk up a flight of stairs, unable to play outdoors with other children, pretty much alone. But with the help of my parents and my younger brother and my doctor, I too found new life, new hope, new health. And now I am dedicating the rest of my

life to helping others who now have no hope, no hope for survival.

In that first Good Friday, the disciples were complete bereft, completely defeated, completely alone. Their leader had been murdered as if he were a common thief and a murderer, crucified between two thieves and murders. He was hung with those whose lives had been shortened by what evil they had done, and he was suffering for all the good he had done. It is a crazy world, isn't it, when we see so many innocent people suffering and dying every day, from covid, from tornados, from war. The dead will indeed feel better after death if they have died within God's love; and we are

never the ones to decide who has that love and who has rejected it. But our hearts are saddened for all who have died, as Jesus' disciples were saddened by the death of their Master.

Yet the end of the story was quickly overturned. The one who created all of creation--who himself created life--his heavenly Father brought him back from the grave and breathed new life into him, and he still lives and reigns in heaven above, knowing our pain, knowing our loss, knowing our troubles, knowing our constant need for God's forgiveness as we fall so short of God's expectations.

But the pain, the ultimate pain of death, is completely resolved. The pain that death brings will only last for a little while, and then there will be healing and wholeness like we had never experienced.

As Christ yet lives, he gives us eternal life with him in all his heavenly glory.

Death has no more sting. Death has no more control. Death is vanquished forever by the great miracle of the Resurrection.

In Christ we glory. In Christ we also will be risen. In Christ we all have the comfort that all the ills of this life are only temporary, only transient. And then we too will find the pain is

gone forever. And we will rejoice eternally in the arms of our great King and Redeemer.

Christ has risen. Alleluia. The Lord has risen indeed. Alleluia.

Amen.

“Why do we look for the living among the dead”

Description: Christ Jesus was raised from the dead to heal us, to encourage us, and to give us with him life everlasting.

Tags: Jesus, Christ, peace, healing, pain, children, cancer, war, temporary, death, rock, anchor, refuge, creation, creator, life, pain, living