

“I am the vine, you are the branches; abide in me and you will bear much fruit.” John 15:5

Vine & Branches

from St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church, 720 N. King Street, Honolulu, HI 96817 • Phone (808) 845-2112

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Weekly Edition
April 20, 2022

The Right Reverend
Robert L. Fitzpatrick
V Bishop of Hawaii

The Reverend
David J. Gierlach
Rector

The Reverend
Imelda S. Padasdao,
Priest Associate

The Reverend Peter S. M. Fan,
Cantonese Language Priest

Fr. Mafi Vakameilalo,
Priest Associate

Hsiao Ying “Ajaon” Chen
Choir Director

Bill Slocumb
Parish Administrator

—
Cathy Lowenberg
Senior Warden

Mosese Langi
Junior Warden

Dawn Morais
Secretary

Tricia Castro
Treasurer

www.stelizabeth720.org
stelizabethhawaii
@gmail.com

Today is the day when the rubber meets the road in our faith. It's the day that distinguishes Christianity from all other faith traditions.

It's the day that makes a claim about that which is actually true. That resurrection is our destiny.

Every once in awhile, some bishop or seminary professor, in one denomination or another, says something like: “No rational person can believe in the resurrection.”

And every time I hear it, it pretty much takes my breath away. After all, from the very beginning, Paul comes to see, with absolute clarity, that if Christ is not raised, then our faith is for nothing.

That if Christ isn't raised, we are no better than fools — rightful objects of pitiful disdain. And yet in these modern times, we Christians seem to be in one of two camps.

The first camp says “we don't believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus — because science proves that dead people stay dead.”

And so we admire Jesus for his moral witness, for his ethical teaching, and we believe, like good Greek philosophers, that his soul went up to God.

The second camp says that no matter what science says, God, from time to time, will poke his finger into our affairs and perform a supernatural miracle, which includes the bodily resurrection of Jesus.

But both of these camps make assumptions about God that are based neither in the Jewish faith nor in early Christianity. In fact, both camps reflect a very different world view. One that the Greeks invented.

Which we rediscovered and embraced a few hundred years ago. When the rise of science and so-called “objective thinking” gave us what we now call “the Enlightenment.”

It's a view of reality that says God (or the gods) (assuming God or the gods exist) put things in motion, and then left us to our own devices.

It's a view of reality that says between heaven and earth there is an impassable chasm which, during our life on this earth, is never crossed, except maybe for that rare, supernatural, intervention.

Both of these points of view are so very tempting to follow because with both of them, we are in control of our own destiny.

We rule the roost here on earth. We can make love and make war as we see fit. We get to control people, places and things, because, after all, God (or the gods) left it all to us. But that's not the Christian faith!

Our faith is in a good Creator who is constantly in the process of calling all that is into being. Our faith is in a good Creator who creates us in her very image.

Our faith beckons us to encounter here, now, the One who is so intimately connected with us that he walks in the garden with our first parents.



Who leads his first people out of slavery through waters and desert. Who, when the time is right, becomes one of us! Lives with us. Cooks for us.

Reminding us of who and what we are intended to be. Who then dies at the hands of our addiction, our obsession, our insistence, that we are in control.

That death occurred on Friday. It's Sunday morning now. And a question is restlessly hanging out there, awaiting an answer: Who wins? Us? Or God?

The resurrection answers that question once and for all. God wins. Not through a one off supernatural intervention from far away, but through the ever existing Source that holds all things together.

The resurrection is not an out-of-this-world miracle. It is the direct and natural consequence of the power of love. That singular power which is the true wellspring of all that is. The resurrection is God remaking the old creation. Transforming it into what it was always intended to be. The place where love rules.

And so Jesus' body is itself redeemed. The first fruit of this new, restored, creation. He bears the marks of his wounds. And yet he also appears and disappears at will. Meaning, that the scars and brokenness we encounter in this world are healed and transformed, but never lost.

Love carries us into this new way of being. And so he cooks breakfast for his friends on the beach.

And then vanishes after breaking bread with the disciples at Emmaus.

Which tells us that the banquet feast of God is not a spiritual daydream, but a real meal.

Where real, yet transformed delights, await all of us. The resurrection is a glimpse into the true nature of reality. What is real is not us here and God far away. But God here. Among us.

Revealing herself in the faces of the poor, the vulnerable, the needy.

What is real is that heaven and earth, the sacred and the profane, intersect, overlap, and are infused with each other. What is real is that the cosmic shift in the world occurred not during the last few hundred years due to the Enlightenment.

No, the cosmic shift occurred on Easter morning. When our true nature and our true destiny is revealed.

On Easter morning, we learn again what it means to be made in the image of God.

On the one hand, it means every human being carries within themselves the very spark of the divine. And as importantly, it means we share in the task of the divine. To encounter creation from the standpoint of love.

To care for the earth and each other. To discover what we all of us know deep in our bones. That love, through self-giving service, is the wellspring of life. The philosopher says: "It is love that believes the resurrection."

Not gooey, sentimental, Hallmark card love. But the love that is enchanted with, respectful of, and surrenders to the joy of knowing and loving another person. As we are. For who we are.

For many generations now, love has been cut out of the text of our universities, our businesses, our governments.

We've reduced love to silly marshmallow sweetness or banal greeting cards or foolish reality TV shows. But make no mistake, love is the life force of creation!

How different from our current thinking, which sees reality as a cosmic accident, the result of some crazy chance, in which power and manipulation and coercion are the coin of the realm.

How different from our social engineering that relegates so many to so little in life, so that the few may enjoy wealth beyond measure.

If we finally recapture the significance of this day, if we open ourselves to the vast power of love: of one another, of this planet, of ourselves as beloved children of God, we can then be part of the unfolding new creation that began that first Easter morning.

In these days of a pandemic that continues to linger on, a pandemic that has provided opportunity to rethink how we live our lives, we have a chance to reclaim our true character — and our true destiny.

We can choose to create beloved communities, grounded in service. We can choose to accept one another as blessed children of the good Creator.

And when we make those choices, when we live each day into those choices, we can change the world!

So I ask you: Are you willing to take hold of your true divine self? Are you willing to recognize that the God who raises Jesus from the dead is the same God who will one day raise you too?

Are you willing, this Easter, to embrace the stone that the builders rejected, which becomes the very cornerstone of all that is?

That rejected cornerstone, has a name. Its name is love. Love raises Jesus today. Love shall raise you too. May we embrace it. Learn from it. Grow in it. And when the time comes, die in it.

For we will all of us rise again — into a new and glorious life, forever and ever!

Quotable Quotes From Notable Folks



I think God is on Earth, inside every living being. What we call "the divine" is none other than the energy of awakening, of peace, of understanding, and of love, which is to be found not only in every human being, but in every species on Earth.

- Thich Nhat Hanh
Thich Nhat Hanh gems



We cannot attain
the presence of God
because we're already
totally in the
presence of God.
What's absent
is awareness.

—Richard Rohr,
What the Mystics Know

**TIPS ON HOW TO
FALL ASLEEP IN A
LIVING ROOM CHAIR:**

- 1. BE OLD**
- 2. SIT IN A CHAIR**

St. E's On The Move!



From Palm Sunday...



To Auntie Ronnie's high heeled scrambled eggs...



Life at St E's continues to be a joy filled celebration of God's in-breaking Kingdom, smack dab in the middle of lovely downtown Palama!!