

Easter 3C
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Happy Easter!

Does it still feel like Easter to you?

In light of this past week's events in Essex Fells, it doesn't really feel like Easter, does it?

It certainly didn't feel that way for the fishermen coming up with empty nets after a long night's work.

It certainly didn't feel like Easter, as Jesus' disciples went back to business as usual, back to fishing, after their leader, teacher, friend had been killed.

So, there was to be no more teaching, no more preaching, no more healing, no more Good News; that was all over.
What was left was just work; just fishing and empty nets; life, as usual.

When something as horrific as what happened this past week, we forget all about Easter, and that we are Easter people. Instead, Easter Day becomes nothing more than a one-day event filled with the sentiment of the family traditions of food, chocolate bunnies and a church service. We can feel that it has no staying power, or lasting relevance.

Peter, for whom this church is named, felt much the same. He had walked with Jesus, had seen the miracles of the Christ. But when the going got tough, he three times denied knowing Jesus. And after Jesus was crucified, Peter threw in the towel regarding this God business. He went back to his old life and just did what he had done before. He went fishing.

Did that work?

No.

He caught nothing.

His nets came up empty.

Then the risen Christ, on the shore, meets up with him again.

Where the calling of the disciples began, at the side of the shore where they were mending nets, the Risen Christ comes again.

The Gospel story comes full circle, starting at the shores of their lives, and coming again to tell them to resurrect their ministry, and begin anew.

They obey the command to drop the net up on the other side, and it comes up teeming with fish.

Peter gets so overwhelmed with joy with the recognition of the Christ, he puts on his clothes and then jumps into the water and swims to this man that he loved and betrayed.

He experiences a baptism of love and reconciliation as he swims toward the risen Christ.

With the resurrected Christ, he undid his three-time denial, by proclaiming to Christ three times in this Gospel, I love you, I love you, I love you.

My brothers and sisters, going back to business as usual after Easter Day doesn't work for us either.

Our nets, outside of the resurrected Christ, will continue to come up empty.

For we are Easter people.

We are people of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It is our job, as Peter found out that day on the beach, to proclaim the resurrection, and to be agents of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Life, once we meet God on the shores of our lives, is never to be the same.

We are to forsake the Peter part of ourselves, and proclaim and focus on the love of God, rather than shrink back into our daily routine and let evil have the final say.

We are to keep our eye on the prize, proclaiming by word and deed the resurrection of Christ, when many are tempted to contemplate only His crucifixion.

Has there ever been a more important time to be an agent of the resurrection of Christ?

Has there ever been a more needed time to have our nets of love ready?

Has there ever been a more urgent time to be ambassadors of the love and grace of God in this violent and broken world?

Why else did God summon us out of bed this morning?

It wasn't just to make us feel good personally.

It was to empower us to be agents of new life in this world.

To give us the courage to say, Alleluia, He has Risen.

The Lord Has Risen Indeed. Alleluia.

Amen.