

Easter Day 4-4-10 St. Luke's, EG 8 & 10

**Through Earthquake, fire and flood, Christ is Risen; the Lord is Risen indeed. Alleluia!** In the name of the Living God, Father, Son & Holy Spirit. Amen.

Preaching this Easter Day 2010 I find a number of images etched in my soul that help me sing the songs of the season despite earth's lamentations for the devastations of earthquake, fire and flood that have recently afflicted so many.

The first is an image of a wounded Haitian woman, lying in a hospital bed, minus one arm and one leg. The news cameras capture her singing hymns of praise. The woman is twenty-six years old and has dreams of becoming a physician; she plans to care for others living with artificial limbs. The doctors say she is truly remarkable and her songs bring hope to all she encounters. Her **voice of life** is rising above the terror of death left in the wake of the massive earthquake.

Another image, more local, is of the smoke and flames rising from Trafalgar which so many of us witnessed coming up or down Post Road last month as 42 people lost their homes and worldly possessions in an early morning blaze. Such an outpouring of community support and response issued forth from so many, including our own vestry who without a wimper voted to tithe our Easter offering today **IN ADVANCE** to assist our neighbors in dire need. Furniture, clothing, kitchen supplies and funds have come from many of you all facilitated by local church and community efforts and energy.

And finally more recently I have a picture in my mind of those made homeless or otherwise left immensely indisposed by the flood of the century and picture all the efforts extended this past Holy Week to rescue and relieve those in dire trouble, some our very own neighbors and parishioners.

Earthquake, fire and flood! What a way to come into Easter Day, looking for the **power of the resurrection** once more to give us hope in hard times.

As I ponder those images and try hard to make connections with God's saving power in the midst of it all, more pictures come to mind in our recent life together:

A little baby named Samantha who has suffered with a brain tumor almost since her birth, turning two, and thank God, being able to have her family around her grateful for successful surgery and a chance for more life. I see her mother weeping for joy bringing her precious one to church for a blessing, and a kind of homecoming after her most recent hospital sojourn.

I picture another little girl, a sweet little thing named “Lanaih,” a staple of our 8 o’clock congregation, soon to be adopted by her foster mother, who is and will be surrounded by so much love of newly acquired grandparents, uncle and aunt, and a whole church family to continue to support and love her along her own journey in faith. The mother will offer an act of thanksgiving in two weeks at this altar rail at 8 am: **“My soul magnifies the greatness of the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my savior.”**

Another image, far more solemn, yet still profoundly moving is of a recently bereaved father, who lost his precious son, to the ravages of addiction, standing in our auditorium this past Monday in Holy Week making a witness at a community meeting of parents and townspeople who care about our young people, saying how **“the very ground we were standing on, the place we were gathered,”** is so important to the life of our families, that is often taken for granted.

I thought, oh my goodness, what a sign of the resurrection, that this dad could not only be here among us, but be so impassioned to want to reach out to others with a kind of good news, that in the face of the Cross he had bourn in the death of his own son, how important we can be to each other living our lives in community with care and concern for one another. His was a kind of song, in its own way, that brought hope to the gathered even in the midst of tears:

**“My song is Love unknown, my savior’s love to me!”**

God bless Andre Rocke, and his son, Addison in heaven, and their whole family on this Easter day.

Easter comes on its own schedule; we can’t control it, manipulate it, force it on our own terms. Rather, in the midst of the tombs of our lives, we can but have faith that God will act, just as we have seen and known in the past, and why we sing in that psalm:

**“On this day the Lord has acted; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”**

As I connect to that injured woman in Haiti, singing her songs of faith, I take heart and realize once more that as much as what can be stripped away by an earthquake, or burned up in a fire or drowned in a flood, **still the power of God reigns in the lives of those who trust and believe** that the best is yet to come. Like that lady who wanted to be buried with a fork in her casket, because she'd always been told at those church dinners to hold on to that fork, for the cake was coming, and it would be the best, and she wasn't gonna miss out!

Easter is not just a wonderful event happening a long time ago. It is a once-for-all-time truth in which the resurrection principle is revealed:

**“In Christ, all is made alive!”**

Whatever tomb you may be in, wherever you expect deadliness, and have give up hope, **Christ can raise you up!** That is the promise of this day!

For the power that took Jesus through death and beyond gives us the capacity to triumph over every evil, over all the forces of creation, be they earthquake, fire or flood, or whatever the lamentations of this human life of ours!

As we live by this assurance of “Christpower” we come alive in hope. That is what Easter life is all about and why we can sing our hearts out on a day like today and for the next 50 Great days of this season:

**Jesus Christ is Risen today. Let us rejoice and be glad in it! Alleluia!**