

God's Voice through Easter (Vigil)  
April 11, 2020

Ash Wednesday began with the voice of God calling us  
to Rend your hearts, not your garments.

Good Friday the heart of Jesus was rent open by a soldier's lance... and out poured the life of  
Christ—the ultimate expression of God's desire to restore us to having hearts  
like the one in whose image we were created...  
a heart that would not close itself to sharing love no matter what.

All of Lent we heard differing voices: of Jesus, of the Father, of Satan, of disciples, and of our  
own fears, desires and temptations.

We listen to find clarity. What is God saying to us in the midst of it all?

The scriptures we heard tonight sum up what God has been vocalizing all throughout  
human history.

In Genesis God told us we were created in the goodness of God's likeness!

We were created to imitate Him not only in stewardship of a mind-bogglingly beautiful  
world, but in the image of the God who is love that reaches out,  
and draws like lovers close.

--the separation of shelter in place is not man's natural, nor desired state!

Clearly, God wants us to hear "don't be afraid of self-giving love—you were created for it!"

God in Exodus next speaks to Moses: with arm outstretched, split the sea in two...

that the Israelites may pass through—the waters like a wall to the right and left.

Clearly, God wants us to hear that God acts to free us for sharing love, from whatever  
oppresses or enslaves us... don't be afraid to help each other love freely!

Through the prophet Isaiah, God invites then and now: Come thirsty ones to the water;  
receive, eat, without paying and without cost! Why spend for what fails to satisfy?

Why, God asks, do you work so hard to find happiness separated from each other--  
not for sake of this pandemic or your wellness—but chasing after things of God's  
creation, when what you claim as your own ends up possessing you... and keeping  
you from love?

Clearly, God wants to give us the life & love that will satisfy our desires... if we will let God.  
So don't be afraid that a relationship with God can't provide that!

In the Gospel, the two Marys are on their way to tell the apostles about the angel at the tomb,  
and Jesus meets them. They are fearful, yet overjoyed!

A little of both—fear of what they don't understand. But joyful that what will satisfy their  
broken hearts...being with Jesus again... might be true. The joy pushes back the fear.  
And God's Son says to them "Do not be afraid." Do not be afraid—make room for joy!

Of all the things God has said down through the history of God's story with humanity,  
are not those 4 words what God most desperately wants us to hear, and hear clearly?

Even Jesus' passion and crucifixion for us, is one long victory cry of Jesus, "Do Not Be  
Afraid ...to trust in God's care, so you are free to love!" He perfectly gives voice with  
his life to what God the Father has been trying to say since the Garden of Eden!

No matter what or how God said it: prophets, miracles, freeing them from slavery, freeing  
them from exile... covenants and promises.... God's people would not hear God's "do  
not be afraid"... over their fears of missing out, or fears of what limit life for them.

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So God's son comes to go through what is most fear-inducing and separation from life, experience possible—crucifixion and betrayal by friends... so He could say to these women Do Not Be Afraid—and be sure to tell those 12 apostles the same... in a voice they and we could hear. God's voice is telling you and I the same. Do not be afraid!

St. Paul is the latest Scriptural voice God uses tonight:

If we have been baptized into his death...we will share in His resurrection.

Jesus' leaving the tomb to continue in relationship with those he loves is the path we follow when we die to our fears, and let God take us through them... to new life.

So when I'm trying to figure out which is God's voice in the midst of the noise...

Easter reminds me to notice which voices are fear-filled, self-concern directed.

If we turn them off by listening first to Jesus say "Do not be afraid"

we will have a lot fewer voices to sort through... a lot fewer.

Then we can hear which voice is calling me to generosity and joy, and focuses me on God rather than self.

That voice... the voice of eternal life...is God's voice... in the noise.