

Jesus is risen! So what?

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Alleluia! The Lord is risen

The Lord is risen indeed Alleluia!

So what? Now that got your attention, but this is a legitimate question. Jesus is risen so what? What does it matter? More importantly what does it mean to you?

If something doesn't change in your life because of the life, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus than this is just another day to by a new hat or new clothes, celebrate a nice meal with family and maybe friends and enjoy all those Easter chocolates. That is what this holiday means to most people. I was in a bookstore a couple years ago and all around the checkout counter were books about Easter, but nothing about Jesus. Lots of cute children's books about bunnies, but nothing about why this is the most important event in the history of the church! If nothing changes then we in the church have failed.

You may have noticed that when I told the resurrection story from Matthew that I went past where the official lectionary passage ended. Now as the priest I get to make that decision. I can always choose to lengthen a passage and I did this for the Easter gospel for a very good reason. That reason is to answer the so what question; to explain what this all means for you, for our church and for the world.

What I wanted to get to is the Great Commission, that final passage in Matthew that says go! Go out into the world! This is about what we call praxis, the path the actual practice of being a Christian. You see just believing is not enough. Orthodoxy means having the right beliefs, but orthopraxy means living those beliefs, putting them into action. This is where Easter really has it's meaning.

This past week The Rev. Cynthia Bourgeault, an Episcopal Priest who works closely with Fr. Richard Rohr has been writing a series of reflections. She proposed the idea of equating, Jesus, his incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection as an uploading a system update. In fact more like a complete system revision. The challenge is this is a work in progress and there are frequent, or at least there should be frequent updates to this major revision. I am hoping that maybe I can prompt you to choose to update your system this morning.

This is of course a great opportunity for that update because this morning we have 7 baptisms at the 11:00 service. At both services we will all stand and re-affirm our baptismal vows. Well folks there is your operating system. Some of

you have already installed it, but most of us including myself still have not taken advantage of or use all the updates to our way of being that are found there.

I want to focus on two parts of the system update. The first is moving away from a dualistic way of thinking. We live in a world defined by who we are as opposed to others. I believe this and you believe that. I am right so therefore you are wrong and I don't have to like or deal with you. Jesus turns that entire concept upside down. On Maundy Thursday after the foot washing says, I give you one more commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you. Now just starting with loving everyone within our church, our group our nation is a good start. Jesus however tears down all those boundaries that our dualistic self wants to build up and sustain. The idea that my church, my group my whatever is better than everyone else makes our ego feel so good and superior. Jesus however tears that all down when he redefines who and what our neighbor is.

Notice when the women fell at his feet the text says they worshipped him. Yet what does Jesus do, he lifts them up and sends them telling them to go quickly and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, there I will meet them. Then his next step is to tell them to go, go into the world making disciples of all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Then he says to teach them obey everything I have commanded and know that I am with you even unto the end.

The resurrection is not the end, the resurrection is the reboot of the world's operating system and a new beginning. Jesus' life, his death and his resurrection do change everything. In Jesus, God teaches us what it means to be truly human. The cosmic Christ, the part of the Trinity that with the rest of the Trinity is eternal and has always been here, became human so that we could learn and understand in a unique way.

So you who will be baptized are about to get that system update installed. I suspect some of you have may have been using a beta version a test system for years, but here comes the real thing. Your presenting your self for baptism is like clicking the accept button on the terms and conditions for the system update. I suspect that like with that computer system update which nobody truly reads, you don't really yet know everything that is in that acceptance. I know I am certainly still learning what they involve, but that's what all these people gathered here today are for.

The final question is what to do once you have rebooted the system. Well the directions are right there in the baptismal covenant. Those five promises are how Jesus taught us to live our lives. Now the Great Commission tells us to go out and make disciples of all nations. That does not mean I expect you to knock on doors asking people have you found Jesus. My suggestion is more along the lines of what St. Francis taught. Preach the gospel at all times, use words only when necessary.

How you live the gospel as it says in the one promise where you promise to proclaim by word and example the Good News is more by doing than speaking. There are plenty of people out there who preach the gospel and then do just the opposite. I would suggest you live the gospel and show people that you are a disciple rather than just talk about it. How do we do that? Well by first of all seeing the Christ in everyone, even if they are not Christian. Let me give you an example.

My wife Wendy is the chaplain for Canterbury Episcopal Ministry at Old Dominion University. She works with a Christian ministry called Global House that ministers to international students attending and attached to the university. They occasionally meet and have events at the Canterbury Center. They learned of a group of Turkish officers detailed to NATO here in Norfolk. Now these men are stuck here. Some of them had returned to Turkey following the failed coup. All who went back were arrested and jailed upon entering the country. These officers and their families are now refugees here in Norfolk. No work, no pension, no connections except for this group of Christians. They are helping them adjust to their new reality. They are all Moslem. Somebody says, why is a Christian group helping them. In short they answered, because it is what Jesus would do. For in Christ there is no Greek or Jew, slave or free. It really is that simple

You see that is how we live into our software update. We stop seeing people in that dualistic them and us and simple see children of God, nothing more nothing less. So those of you being baptized and those of you who are reaffirming your baptismal vows this morning, this is how we change the world. So go, go into the world making disciples of all nations. Go and share the good news with everyone, but mostly go and do, don't just talk.