

Easter 2014

Picture the last supper. You are Jesus. Around the table are the motley crew of people who have attached themselves to you. Maybe you don't like some of them. Maybe they're not all that keen on you, but something makes them stick. You know that some of them plot behind your back. You know that some of them jostle for the place of deputy. Some of them have mummies and possibly daddies who are not above trying to get favours for their little darlings. They say one thing to your face, but when push comes to shove, they say something else behind your back. Some of them do the dirty on you. And all of them dissolve into thin air when the going gets really tough. There is something of Satan in them all.

This, girls and boys, is us here. In a few minutes time we will kneel at the altar and share in the holy mysteries. Next to us will be someone in one or more of those categories—just like each one of us.

Get over it. Getting over it is resurrection. Here are some other ways of thinking about resurrection in our lives.

Forgiveness. Putting the past behind us. Not forgetting, but rather learning from whatever happened. If we do not forgive, we hurt ourselves more than we hurt the person we think has offended us.

Imagination. Think how things could be better, Think what might increase the amount of delight in the world and work for it. Work, that is, from where we are, not from where we would like to be, or where we used to be. This means beginning by taking stock of reality.

Breaking down barriers How does the chicken get out of the shell? I want to spend a little more time on this. We spend our lives building our own tombs, constructing them from the inside.

- We're careful about how we seem to our friends – Facebook designed for life in the tombs.
- We're careful not to think too much or too deeply about anything, especially about ourselves and who we are.
- We're careful not to say too much or to show our thoughts.
- We kid ourselves that we're making ourselves safe as we build our tomb stone by stone. Stones of attitudes, possessions, obsessions, bank balances, club memberships, prejudices. Then when we put the last stone in place, we reach that moment when we feel completely safe. We cut out the last ray of light from the outside, and we sit in the artificial light of the windowless room. There we stay, physically alive and spiritually dead.

We shut ourselves off from life and from the Divine. *We inclose ourselves in our own fat.* We are so careful about controlling our lives that we exclude everything and everybody.

Those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. Two different sorts of life: one risk free but spiritually dead, the other vulnerable and risky but alive. Like standing on the top of Everest and shouting 'I'm alive, I'm alive, I'm alive!' This is the real me living life to the full.

Resurrection is about breaking down barriers like the chick coming out of the egg from the inside. You can't see the light if you hide it, or unless you smash the pot it's in. As we demolish barriers, we will feel vulnerable. When we are most vulnerable we are most in touch with, and completely safe in, the Divine. Some of you think I talk too much about death. That pleases me, for the main job of the priest is to prepare people for death. It's good to get to the end of life feeling that it's been one hell of a ride.

And that's perhaps the best way of looking at resurrection: *make life one hell of a ride.* A very happy Easter to you all.