

SURPRISE!



The events of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Morn are described by theologians as "The Paschal Mystery.'

That means the pattern of Jesus, living, dying, and rising again. But you do not need theologians to explain it to you. You will know it when you see it, or see it symbolized in nature or in events around you, or within you.

The seed is buried in the dark subsoil and emerges as wheat.

The worm enters the dark cocoon and emerges a butterfly!

The alcoholic hits rock bottom on his darkest night AND RISES UP AND OUT OF DARKNESS, ONE STEP AT A TIME THROUGH AA!

"And Mary of Magdala goes to the tomb with the spices she had prepared..."

And SURPRISE!

IN THE DARKNESS OF GRIEF SHE IS EXPECTING DEATH, AND SHE DISCOVERS LIFE!

And for her, and sometimes for us, the darkest hour is closest to a new light.

Surprise! We love surprises. Remember as a little child playing the first childhood game:

"Peek-A-Boo!"

The fun of it was seeing a familiar face disappear, and the reappear again.

Well today is the Feast of The Great Surprise!

How wonderful the Paschal Mystery: the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus!

I would close this Easter reflection with a story:

In 1994, I was Co-Pastor of St. Gerald's Parish at 96th and Q Street in Omaha and we were engaged in building a new church. When we visited with the sculptor about a Christ figure for the cross in the sanctuary, my friend and Co-Pastor Larry Dorsey said:

"We want the image of Christ to be a smiling welcoming Jesus!"

And I responded:

"Yes, but the people will also want the suffering Jesus on the cross, so why not create two different images, and the suffering Jesus can appear during Lent and the risen, smiling, welcoming Jesus replace him on Easter and remain til next Lent, for after all, Jesus hung on the cross for three hours, not for all of his life."

And so it came to be.

Shortly after the new church opened, we ran an ad in the local paper announcing an open house wher the public could come and tour the new church.

Later we received a letter from one of the visitors. He wrote:

"When I saw your ad in the paper, out of curiosity I decided to come and tour the new church.

I have been out of the Church for a long time, and it was my first time in a Catholic church building in 30 years.

But when i entered and looked uo at the smiling Jesus, with his arms extended in welcome, I was deeply moved, and decided it was time to come home again!"

So on this glorious Easte Morn, may we all walk into Church and be greeted by the Risen Jesus with his arms wide open in welcome.

and may we be surprised once more that:

"God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son, not to condemn the world, but to save us!"

And to raise us all up to a new and better life!

HAPPY EASTER!