

Weekly Musing † April 19, 2011

When I was a kid, we used Mercurochrome or Methiolate for cuts. The latter hurt a lot and I remember being told that was a sign of it working. OK, perhaps not the best explanation, but not all that bad. Sometimes pain is necessary for healing. I suspect it would be tempting to skip over Good Friday and all of that stuff and immediately go to Easter. Of course it doesn't work that way.

As I said on Palm Sunday, the passion of Christ is his central act of Messiahship. It is why Jesus is Jesus. Other people have died painfully even sacrificially. But other people were not the Son of God. That is the difference and it is a big difference. There is a cost to Easter and that cost is Good Friday.



More and more the idea of sacrifice for others is disappearing from our perception of who we are as a people. In World War II when Field Marshal Rommel was defeated by the British in North Africa, the result was 400,000 German prisoners of war. The British couldn't really take them, they already faced great shortages of food at home. They asked the US to take them and we did, even though we had rationing in America. The prisoners were treated scrupulously well, so well, that after the war, many remained and became American citizens. I wonder if we are capable of such an act of generosity these days when many balk at government aid to even our own poor.

The cross of Christ reminds us of sacrifice and that it is not an addendum to what Christians are called to be. Without Christ's sacrifice there would be no Easter. Christians of all people are called to be generous and giving as a way of life. As I have mentioned before, in the Roman empire what finally moved many Romans about Christianity was not its theology or liturgy. It was the fact that Christians routinely fed the old women among them. You probably remember this in the readings from Eastertide when the first deacons were appointed to supervise the feeding of widows. It was this generosity towards those of no particular use by the standards of the day that apparently attracted many people to Christianity. "Christians of equally good conscience," as Bishop Bennett Sims used to say, "can and do disagree." However, hardheartedness is finally not an option for Christians.

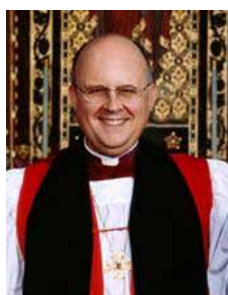


I will close with my two favorite Resurrection images, one East and one West. The first is the Anastasis, the harrowing of hell, in which Christ rescues Adam and Eve from the grave. It is from the Byzantine church at Chora in Istanbul. It dates from the 14th century. The other is Mathias Grunewald's Resurrection from the Isenheim altarpiece and dates to the early 16th century.

News from St. Luke's

Thanks to all who helped with the Episcopal Church Women's spring luncheon. As usual it was a big success. The Holy Week schedules have been published elsewhere but here is a recap:

Maundy Thursday 7 pm
Good Friday noon
Easter Vigil 5 pm.
Easter 8 and 10 am



Bishop's Annual Visitation Sunday, May 1, 10 am

Remember, the bishop will be here on May 1. There will be a Saturday service the night before but there will only be one service on May 1 at 10 am.

