

Ponderings of Pastor Paul

Easter is the unthinkable and absurd. That which was cursed and abandoned, even it seems by God, comes to resurrection. How did the early Christians come to understand Easter? How do we come to understand the unthinkable and absurdness of Easter?

As we go through the Easter texts for this liturgical season, it is strange to me that no one claims to witness the actual event of the resurrection. It is certainly not how I would have orchestrated the event. I would have had full news coverage with video and unquestionable proof. Yet, the Biblical record is not given to us to that we may know the resurrection occurred, but that we might trust the resurrection is occurring. So, if we are not given undeniable proof of the resurrection in the Biblical account, what are we given to lead us to trust the resurrection?

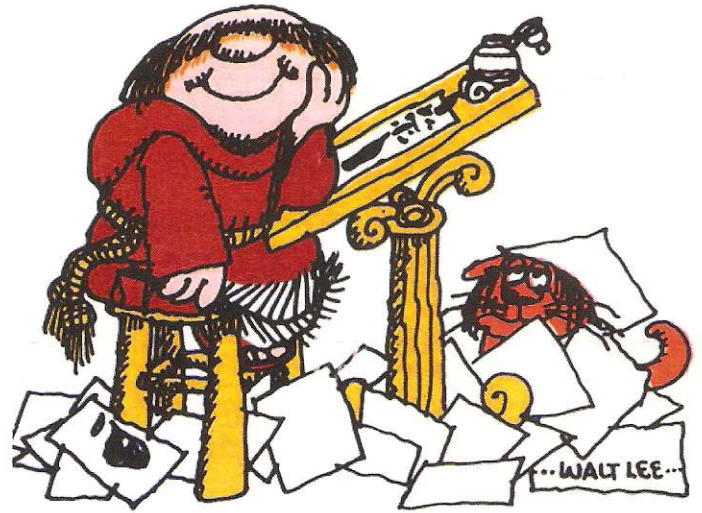
Scripture gives us two things: an empty tomb and encounters with the risen Christ.

There is little doubt the tomb of Jesus was empty on the third day. Even the skeptics of the early Christian movement concede the tomb is empty as they offer alternative explanations, such as someone had stolen Jesus' body. There is little doubt, it is empty.

We were behind in the last inning of play. There is a runner in scoring position, and I am at the plate. It is my chance for glory and fame. The first pitch comes mightily down the center of the plate. I swing with all the power I possess, and harmlessly dribble the ball back to the pitcher for an easy third out. Game over. As we went back to the dugout, the coach just smiled and said, sometimes you just come up empty. What could have been; what should have been; what I dreamt would be—came up empty.

There can be little doubt our tombs are often empty. The way we think things should be, the way we dream things will be, the promise of the world, the beliefs we hold sacred: fail us and we are left empty.

Yet, it is after experiencing the emptiness of the tomb, our lives and our world, the risen Lord is made known. We see the presence of the risen Lord in scripture, in the Eucharist, in prayer, in the faces of the needy. It is in that moment we know a hope that is not based in our lives or our world, or our dreams, but is based in God's word—still present even in the emptiness of life. It is word of life



and love that rises above our limits and short-sightedness. It is a glimpse of God who in love continues to come to us, and continues to bring us to God. In that glimpse there is a freedom, not to know or control, but to trust in the presence of Christ who still rises, even in our emptiness. In that glimpse to know there is no obstacle, locked door, blindness, or fear that will be able to stop the presence of Christ from entering our lives. And as I continue my life in an old world with the same ongoing issues and concerns, I become a new creature of God. How unthinkable and absurd! How Easter!

A friend of mine suggested to me how our present existence is like that of an unborn child. Before our birth, if by some miracle someone could have engaged us in conversation and told us of the life that lay ahead of us after we are born, we could not have gotten our unborn minds around the existence in store for us. We might feel baffled at the unthinkable and absurdness of it. Yet, our emptiness and failure does not stop what life in communion with the love of God will bring us when this life is over and find ourselves face-to-face with the infinite God. At the very least, however, we must rejoice in our coming glory and join the first Christians in praying, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

Our Easter faith? As we continue our course on earth, and as we continue to encounter empty tombs, we trust that as the risen Christ appeared before, he will continue to appear now as the love of God continues to transform our lives.

How unthinkable and absurd! How Easter!

"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

In Christ's aloha and love,

Pastor Paul

Summer Schedule

Summer Schedule Starts:
May 15, 2011
One Service at:
9:00 a.m.

Please help us get the word out! It is always a challenge to change the worship schedule, especially with the number of visitors attending. However, it is also nice to have the entire church ohana worshipping together.

Summer Sunday School

Trying something new! The church bus will continue to pick up children, but will be leaving the church at:

8:30 a.m.

(If you need to be picked-up please let the church office know!)

The kids will join us in church until the sermon. At that time, those younger children who would like to do a lesson based on the "Veggie Tales" series can go to the fellowship hall. Volunteers will lead them through the lesson. When it is time for communion, the children will rejoin us till the end of the service. If families would prefer to keep their children with them throughout the service, they are certainly welcome to do so.

"And he took little children into his arms and he blessed them."

Our children are a blessing to us.

Summer VBS

Last year's format for Vacation Bible School was well received, so if it's not broke???

We will meet after church on the following Sundays:

June 26th & July 24th & August 28th

Lunch, games, activities, and Bible Study will ensue. Ending times may vary with the activities, but it would be a shame to miss out! The bus will also be available to drop kids off after the events. Parents and family are welcome to attend too!



The Lihue Lutheran Church family lovingly and faithfully said "aloha" to four of our dear members this Easter season:

FRANK & MARIAN DEGENNERO

After sixty-six years of married life, Frank and Marian died within twenty-four hours of each other. What a wonderful ending to their life together. We will miss their presence at Mobile Munchies, and the incredible optimism and promise they had in life. Because the funeral was for family only, there will be a brief prayer service this Sunday, May 15th, after the church service at their grave site in our cemetery.

FRANCISCA ALEJANDRO

Francisca's quiet presence and faithful witness will be missed. She was lovingly remembered, celebrated and laid to rest on Saturday, April 23rd. We rejoice as she is reunited with Pablo.

PAT FARIAS

Decorating the Christmas tree, or preparing the Easter crosses, or dancing in the midst of worship, Pat's steadfastness was a gift to us all. She was lovingly remembered, celebrated and laid to rest on Friday, April 22nd. It seems appropriate that she should pass on Easter morning!

Please hold these families in your prayers as you continue to remember them in your hearts.

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, shall never die." (John 11:26)

Baccalaureate

The Lihue Lutheran Church family rejoices with the youth of our church who are graduating this year.

Receiving a High School Diploma: *Keenan Javinar, Sean O'Flaherty, Toby Riggle*

Receiving an Associate in Arts: *Logan Alcott, Shannon Pabo.*

Receiving a Bachelors Degree: *Kasey Fernandez, Kurtis Javinar, Chelsea Pabo, and Danny Riggle*

We pray God's continued blessing as they reach this milestone, and begin new challenges!

Labor Day Sun. Church Picnic

Sunday, September 4th.

Come share fun, fellowship and celebrate the end of summer with a Church Picnic. Bring a side dish or dessert to share, and the church will provide the hamburgers, hot dogs and all the fixing's. Why do it? Just for fun !!!

Great Easter!

Many thanks to all those who gave so freely of their time and talents to make Easter a true celebration for our church family! Musicians, decorators, egg hiders, brunch providers, and even "talking trees" all came together to celebrate our Lord's resurrection. Mahalo



Lihue Lutheran Church, ELCA



Serving Our Lord and Kauai since 1881

*Remembering Our Past . . . Renewing Our Future
Mai Poina Ka Mole . . . E Ho'omaka Hou Ka Hana Mua*

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