

Easter Sunday, 2010

Luke 24

Children can be very confused by adults- and most of us remember baffling moments- when we began to understand the world was more complex than we'd thought- my grandfather's wake was one of those moments- my mother and her three sisters- they were- as you'd expect broken hearted- and occupied with the business at hand- and all of that made a certain amount of sense to a eight year old- what I didn't understand was when they were sitting together talking- late in the afternoon.. and they began laughing- and telling stories that made them laugh even harder.

You weren't supposed to laugh were you?

Well- I know now- from observation and from experience- that we do tell stories at wakes and funerals- we remember those we love and we laugh about the joy and goodness of things- most easily when someone's lived a rich full live- and even in other more disturbing situations- not always- but regularly- the wake and the funeral let us remember- and we will remember what was good and loving and wonderful – the ordinary and the amazing- even in the face of loss.

But here- on Easter Day- we can laugh - not because we remember what was- but because we recognize there is a future for more promising than we had thought. Listen to Jesus' parables- and remember those mighty signs he performed; think about how his words opened your heart and remember how compelling his voice was- and even the terrible beauty of his strength and endurance through this last week- the gentle life-changing hospitality he offered in the upper room- the words he said with his last breath- remember that- and then realize that it is not memory of a dead teacher- he is present- free to speak and with hands to bless and with gifts that strengthen us. We can laugh because of what we remember-

but even more because of what will be.

There is for each of us- for all of us - more to know, to hear and to receive from Jesus- Like the women, we may start in the wrong places and have the wrong expectations- but angels will re-direct our attention- and we will remember- not just what was said- but what was promised. It is an odd twist of language- but what we are doing is remembering the future- because it is in his actions and words- in the abundance of his mercy and the challenge of his call- that we are given a future. Turn away from the dead- and the places where dead things are stored- and go back to the living- go back from this Mass to your own life- and there- among the living- you will see him.

So we laugh today- because things are not what they seem- they are far better; we laugh because we remember moments of joy- and are given the promise of an unending joy we laugh- because we realize how foolish we were to look for a future among dead things- when Jesus is living- and has gone on ahead of us- and so our paths lead, with him- through sorrow and even death- to joy and eternal life.

Sermon by Fr. David Cobb, rector
Christ Church New Haven
8 am Early Mass, Easter Sunday (April 4) 2010