

**Sunday, April 4, 2021, the Resurrection of the Lord (Easter Day) Year B**  
**Ask Me How I Know**

**Isaiah 25:6-9**

<sup>6</sup>On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples  
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,  
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

<sup>7</sup>And he will destroy on this mountain  
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,  
the sheet that is spread over all nations;

<sup>8</sup>he will swallow up death forever.

Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,  
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,  
for the Lord has spoken.

<sup>9</sup>It will be said on that day,  
Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.  
This is the Lord for whom we have waited;

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Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God**

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I have been told that if you play a country song backwards you get your dog back, you get your truck back, and you get your true love back. When my mother set out to spring clean she'd put on records by Patsy Cline, who never met a man that didn't leave her, and scrub away all her angst and sorrow. Somewhere out of Nashville there should be a disk titled, *Music to Clean Your House By*. It ought to include songs about getting over that worthless baggage, putting out the torch; finding a way forward in the dark, because a great deal of housecleaning gets side tracked by the old memory train. It regularly pulls out of the station when you come across a box of old photos or decorations or nick-knacks. What to keep, what to throw away is a big part of cleaning because if you toss it out you don't have to clean it. Sometimes I find I have too much stuff. The obvious answer is to throw it all away. A few days later I'll have to go and replace something for which I suddenly have a use.

Most of us have kept Easter for years and years. Each spring it comes around on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox. We dust off the plastic bunnies and dig out the food coloring. Weren't the dyed eggs kept in a basket on

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the dining room table? Why didn't we all succumb to food poisoning? Well last spring a housekeeper bad as Mrs. Danvers in Rebecca threw it all away. She came into our homes and didn't ask if Easter gave us joy, it all went into the waste bin. Lifetimes of tradition were simply erased. The year without Easter came upon us.

Now here we meet, carefully, because it's not all over yet. We furtively pull out some of the few things we saved from a clean out that felt more like an arson attack. Last year it was all tossed out when we weren't looking. What didn't get canceled, though, was the the reason for Easter in the first place. The sun rose on Sunday April 12<sup>th</sup> 2020 to find that the tomb was still empty, the women met an angel, Mary was comforted by a man she took to be a gardener and with less than the usual fanfare, the affirmation of our faith was risen indeed.

Back in 1959 the Platters posed the musical question,

They asked me how I knew  
My true love was true  
Oh-oh-oh-oh, I, of course, replied  
"Something here inside  
Cannot be denied"

So, I smile and say  
"When a lovely flame dies  
Smoke gets in your eyes"

It's not my fault I had older sisters, my music came along later on a BOAC jet from Liverpool via London. We have had to wrestle with a stripped down faith and can truly ask ourselves what has to remain for us to remain faithful. We went without so much of the stuff of our faith yet our faith remains. It's a bit like wondering how much you can throw out before it no longer feels like home.

You cannot get to Easter without following Jesus through the tomb. In time for all of us it all passes away and we are left to travel the way of salvation through the cross

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and through the tomb. It would be impossibly daunting if Jesus hadn't gone on before us to show us the way.

How do I know? The Easter eggs and plastic bunnies are nice reminders, but faith survives without them. So much has been lost by so many since the last normal Easter, but now we know what makes this day special is what happens within us when we encounter the living Christ.

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**Closing Prayer:** Glorious Lord of life, by the mighty resurrection of your Son you overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in him. Grant that we who celebrate with joy Christ's rising from the dead may be raised from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.