



TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

on the Branford Green

May you find Christ, Community and Compassion within these historic walls.

Easter: A Tsunami of Love

By The Rev. Sharon Gracen

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Happy Day! I've been pondering metaphors for Easter all week. Traditionally we have talked about spring as the reappearance of green shoots from branches that seemed dead; new life in the form of baby chicks from eggs, and lambs in the meadow. Those are all very sweet and nice but I think that Easter is something else entirely. The metaphor that has shown some persistence has been a challenging one because of recent experience. It is a tsunami. I kept rejecting it because we have seen too much destruction in recent year from these overpowering waves. But it wouldn't let go. So, imagine if you will the power of a tsunami but instead of destructive seawater, imagine it as love.

However one may think of the resurrection, this awakening was not like that of Sleeping Beauty, a gentle eye-fluttering inhale after a kiss. This was and is a cosmic event. Like the earthquake as he hung on the cross, the pattern of creation was shaken. It was a form of a Big Bang that would tear the confines of space and time and unleash the truth of Christ, remaking creation, particularly humankind, redeeming it from its corrupted form.

Part of the strategy of our worship here at Trinity, and in the Episcopal Church with our attention to the seasons of the church year, is that we have immersed ourselves in Lent and Holy Week. We put away the Alleluias, we donned somber vestments, and sang everything in a minor key. We began every Sunday with a recitation of the Ten Commandments. They are important to remember for more than the correct answers on *Jeopardy*. But they are not inspirational reading. They form the basis for a legal code and they point out that living justly, safeguarding community, and being honorable people is a part of our covenant with God. But they are filled with "you shall nots." Eight of the ten are framed in a negative. While instructive, they do not inspire us. When did you ever hear of anyone saying, "I was going to rob the 7-11 but then I remembered the Ten Commandments and it changed my life." Or "I was going to perjure myself but then I remembered that commandment about not being a false witness and just couldn't do it."

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The 10 Commandments do not inspire us. However, what comes from a concentrated recitation of them is an awareness of our own behavior. We might ask ourselves if having pirated songs on our I-Pods is stealing or not. We are not murderers but how many murders do we watch for entertainment? How do we think about the death penalty? How do we as a culture honor our parents? That commandment becomes about the care and treatment of our older citizens, not just your biological mother and father. Lent has brought these thorny things up to the surface. And we are aware how moored we are to a way of life that is often unjust, unkind, and self-oriented.

And then the tsunami comes; this cosmic wave of love washes over us and it pries us loose from all of our familiar mooring places. Nothing is as it seemed. Death was to be feared, and now, apparently not. We were all separate individuals, defined by jobs and things and tradition but as we tumble along in this wave, and we gasp in some of this love, from within our cells and vessels we are remade into one Body of Christ. We find ourselves having loving thoughts for people we don't even like. We look around at our stuff and realize that some of it could really help someone else. Sacrifice, a word that heretofore made us shudder, now feels like privilege. We find deep joy in giving, not just things or money but ourselves. All that we feared before, particularly difference and change, has been washed in the wave and as people of the Easter tsunami, we are no longer afraid. Our lungs have been filled with the breath of courage and imagination. Our eyes, washed with love, now see what was always there to be seen, the world through God's eyes. We are not a world of sinners we are a beloved people on a journey, finding joy and comfort in our sometimes strange companions, we stumble and are lifted up; we carry someone else's burden for a while, until they are refreshed. We forgive and are forgiven. And every now and then, we stop and shake our heads in wonder what just happened.

It may look like Jesus' resurrection is the reason for today but I promise you, it is only the beginning of life made new, washed in a great wave of pure love. Alleluia!

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