

*EASTER APRIL 3, 2015*

*WHEN ASKED TO DESCRIBE THE MYSTERY OF EASTER, AN AUTHOR BY THE NAME OF CARL KNUDSEN RESPONDED BY TELLING A STORY: YEARS AGO, AN OLD MUNICIPAL LAMPLIGHTER; ENGAGED IN PUTTING OUT THE STREET LAMPS ONE BY ONE, WAS MET BY A REPORTER WHO ASKED HIM IF HE EVER GREW WEARY OF HIS WORK.*

*AFTER ALL, IT WAS A LONELY JOB AND THE NIGHT WAS COLD AND DAMP.*

*"NEVER AM I CHEERLESS" SAID THE OLD MAN, "FOR THERE IS ALWAYS A LIGHT AHEAD OF ME TO LEAD ME ON."*

*"BUT WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO CHEER YOU WHEN YOU HAVE PUT OUT THE LAST LIGHT?" ASKED THE REPORTER*

*"THEN COMES THE DAWN" SAID THE LAMPLIGHTER*

*PATRICIA SANCEZ GOES ON IN A RECENT ARTICLE IN THE NCR....*

*WHAT IF THE SAME QUESTION WAS PUT TO JESUS?*

*ONE LIGHT AFTER ANOTHER DID HE PUT OUT....*

*THE LAMP OF POPULAR ACCLAIM....*

*THE LAMP OF PATRIOTIC APPROVAL....*

*THE LAMP OF ECCLESIASTICAL CONFORMITY....*

*ALL FOR THE SAKE OF GOD'S LOVE.....*

*WHICH BURNED IN HIS HEART AND SHOWED HIM THE WAY...*

*AT LAST EVEN THE LIGHT OF HIS LIFE WAS TO FLICKER OUT ON THE HILL CALLED CALVARY....*

**WHAT THEN?**

**WE HEAR HIS VOICE, "INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT"**

**AND THEN CAME THE DAWN....**

**YES, WE SUFFER THE PAIN OF A BROKEN WORLD, OF DASHED**

**EXPECTATIONS AT TIMES AND OUR OWN PAINFUL MOMENTS...**

**BUT THE RESURRECTION TELLS US THAT SUFFERING IS NEVER THE LAST**

**WORD....**

**THAT GOD IS ALWAYS A GOD OF SURPRISES AND THAT NOTHING IS**

**IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD.....**

**LET US LOOK FOR A MOMENT AT OUR GOSPEL STORY THIS MORNING -**

**THE RESURRECTION STORY....**

**IT COULD JUST AS EASILY BE DESCRIBED AS A LOVE STORY.....**

**IT IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE HEART HAVING ITS OWN REASONS....**

**IT IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF HOW IT MAY TAKE DEEP LOVE TO OPEN OUR**

**EYES AND LET US SEE THE TRUTH...**

**LOVE HELPS US TO KNOW AND SHARE REALITY IN A SPECIAL MANNER...**

**NOTICE IT IS JOHN, THE BELOVED DISCIPLE - WHOM THIS PROPERTY -**

**MT.ST.JOHN IS NAMED AFTER AND WHOSE STATUE IS RIGHT OUTSIDE -**

**WHO ENTERS THE EMPTY TOMB, SEES THE GRAVE CLOTHS AND**

**BELIEVES.....**

**LOVE MAKES THE BELOVED DISCIPLE JUMP AT ONCE TO THE RIGHT**

**CONCLUSION: JESUS HAS BEEN RAISED AND IS ALIVE....**

**WE DO NOT HEAR THAT PETER MADE THAT SAME JUMP INITIALLY**

*LIKewise, MARY MAGDALEN MEETS THE LIVING JESUS BECAUSE SHE  
CAME BACK TO THE TOMB LOOKING FOR HIS DEAD BODY...*

*THE TEARS FLOOD DOWN HER FACE....*

*SHE NOW FINDS TWO ANGELS SITTING IN THE TOMB LIKE A GUARD OF  
HONOR..*

*IN HER GRIEF AND LOVE SHE IS ANXIOUS TO LOCATE THE CORPSE OF  
JESUS...*

*THEN MARY SEES THE GARDENER....*

*SHE IMAGINES THE GARDENER MIGHT HAVE CARRIED OFF THE BODY...*

*"SIR, IF YOU HAVE CARRIED HIM AWAY, TELL ME WHERE YOU HAVE LAID  
HIM"*

*THEN COMES ONE OF THE TENDEREST PASSAGES IN THE WHOLE  
GOSPEL..*

*JESUS SAYS TO HER, 'MARIAM'*

*SHE TURNS AND SAYS TO HIM IN HEBREW, "RABBONI"*

*IMAGINE HER HEARING THAT FAMILIAR VOICE SPEAK HER NAME...*

*AS JAMES MARTIN WRITES IN HIS BOOK ON JESUS, THE EXPERIENCE*

*WOULD HAVE BEEN UNFORGETTABLE....*

*MARIAM.....RABBONI*

*NOT UNTIL JESUS SPEAKS HER NAME DOES MARY KNOW HIM..*

*SHE KNEW THAT DISTINCTIVE VOICE WITH THE NAZARAEN ACCENT....*

*THAT HEALING VOICE THAT EXPELLED WHATEVER DEMONS TROUBLED  
HER...*

*THE VOICE THAT WELCOMED HER INTO HIS CIRCLE OF FRIENDS....*

*THE VOICE THAT TOLD HER SHE WAS VALUED IN THE EYES OF GOD....*

*THE VOICE THAT ANSWERED HER QUESTIONS...*

*THE VOICE THAT LAUGHED OVER A MEAL....*

*THE VOICE THAT CRIED OUT IN PAIN FROM THE CROSS....*

*MARY KNEW THAT VOICE BECAUSE IT WAS A VOICE THAT HAD SPOKEN*

*TO HER IN LOVE...*

*THEN SHE RECOGNIZED WHO IT WAS....*

*BECAUSE SOMETIMES SEEING IS NOT BELIEVING....*

*LOVING IS....*

*LIKE MARY - WE LEARN TO RECOGNIZE THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT OF*

*GOD IN OUR LIVES ONLY GRADUALLY AND ONLY IN OUR HEARTS WITH*

*LOVE...*

*THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT CAN BE RECOGNIZED BECAUSE IT IS*

*UPLIFTING, CONSOLING, ENCOURAGING....LOVING*

*IN TIME WE LEARN TO LISTEN FOR THAT VOICE IN OUR HEARTS...*

*IT BECOMES EASIER TO IDENTIFY AND WHEN WE HEAR IT CLEARLY, IT IS*

*EASIER TO ANSWER....*

*IT IS THE VOICE THAT CALLS US TO BE WHO WE ARE MEANT TO BE...*

*IT IS THE VOICE THAT HELPS US TRANSFORM OUR MOST PAINFUL*

*MOMENTS EVENTUALLY INTO MOMENTS OF GRATITUDE AND PRAISE*

*AND LOVE...*

*AS WE MENTIONED ON PALM SUNDAY HOLY WEEK IS MEANT TO HELP US*

*MOVE IN TIME AND GRADUALLY THRU OUR MOST PAINFUL MOMENTS  
INTO MOMENTS OF GRATITUDE, THANKSGIVING, HOPE AND LOVE....*

*ENABLING US TO SEE THE RISEN CHRIST IN OUR LIVES....*

*ONLY BY MAINTAINING A LOVING HEART IN OUR PAINFUL MOMENTS  
AND, IN FACT, TRANSFORMING OUR BROKEN HEARTS INTO LOVING  
HEARTS THRU OUR PAINFUL TIMES CAN WE BEGIN TO SEE THE RISEN  
CHRIST AMONG US....*

*OF COURSE, WE HAVE OTHER MODELS IN THE NEWS FOR HOW NOT TO  
TRANSFORM OUR BROKEN HEARTS, HOW NOT TO TRANSFORM OUR  
PAIN...*

*WE HAVE A GERMAN CO-PILOT WHOSE PAIN LEADS NOT ONLY TO HIS  
DEMISE BUT THAT OF 150 SOME OTHER PEOPLE AND SUBSEQUENT GRIEF  
OF COUNTLESS SURVIVORS....*

*DAILY WE HEAR ABOUT THE USE OF VIOLENCE AS A WAY OF HANDLING  
PAIN AND DISTRESS - ESP. IN THE MIDDLE EAST BUT ALSO WITHIN OUR  
OWN COUNTRY....*

*BUT THERE IS ANOTHER WAY AND JOHN, THE BELOVED DISCIPLE, AND  
MARY MAGDALEN ARE OUR MODELS AT EASTER TIME*

*FOR GOING THRU THE PAIN, THE BROKEN HEARTS OF OUR HOLY WEEKS,  
OUR TEARS, OUR DISAPPOINTMENTS, OUR LOSSES, OUR DEFEATS, AND  
STILL MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP A MORE LOVING HEART.....*

*AND, IN FACT, IT IS THRU OUR MOST PAINFUL MOMENTS, OUR BROKEN  
HEARTS THAT WE ARE CALLED TO DEVELOP AN EVEN MORE*

***TRANSFORMED AND LOVING HEART....***

***WE ALWAYS HAVE A CHOICE BETWEEN BITTERNESS AND VIOLENCE OR  
EVEN GREATER EMPATHY AND COMPASSION....***

***OF COURSE IT IS NEVER EASY...***

***IT IS ALWAYS A CHALLENGE....IT IS ALWAYS A PROCESS AND***

***WE DESPERATELY NEED THE SUPPORT OF ONE ANOTHER***

***THROUGHOUT OUR HOLY WEEKS, THROUGHOUT OUR SUFFERING....***

***AS WE PONDER IN OUR HEART AT THIS TIME THE***

***RESURRECTION MESSAGE THAT SUFFERING IS NEVER THE LAST***

***WORD, THAT GOD IS ALWAYS A GOD OF SURPRISES AND THAT NOTHING***

***IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD.***

***HAPPY EASTER!!!!***