

Alleluia, the Lord is risen!

Jesus is resurrected!

Resurrection is not resuscitation.

Resurrection is not what happens when a heart stops and we try and do CPR to bring the person back. Resurrection isn't even when someone stops breathing and someone does mouth to mouth, breathing for another person until they can breathe again. Both of those are resuscitation.

Resurrections are all around us. Have you witnessed resurrection in your life? *Without a show of hands*---any addicts in the building? I'll bet you know *personally* the power of resurrection.

Many of us have faced something that made us certain life would never be the same again. That we would never *ever* be the same person again. And we were right—we *weren't* ever the same person again. But finally, after long days, longer nights, tears, depression, anger, surrender and finally peace we discovered resurrection.

Resurrection isn't resuscitation, because when a person is resuscitated, they are still the same person they were before they were resuscitated.

But resurrection--- ahhh--- resurrection is something completely different.

Resurrection can't happen until something dies.

When a seed is planted in the soil, that seed needs to die. We know this. When the seed breaks apart in the soil it has to give up being a seed, otherwise, when we plant a seed the thing that sprouts will be a gigantic seed.

But it doesn't.

It becomes something else. Something more complex. Something bigger. Something stronger.

When Jesus experienced resurrection, he didn't just go back to being a slightly larger version of the person the disciples already knew: maybe a Jesus with longer hair or one who was slightly taller.

That would be ridiculous.

But Jesus had changed. We'll see in upcoming weeks that his friends often didn't even recognize him. He seemed to have new power—he could appear and disappear, walk through walls.

And in a twist of fate that Jesus no doubt had *intended*, his disciples—all of them, not just the 12, but the women, and even the children, experienced resurrection themselves. The old version of the disciples-- who had secretly hoped that Jesus would somehow restore Jerusalem with power and might—that part of them, that secret dream—died.

When their dream died, the tough outer shells of their humanity broke open and they began—slowly at first, and then with greater clarity-- to see with new eyes that all humanity was one. And they became new creations themselves.

What is there in our lives that needs to die and be buried before we can see and trust the resurrection promise that humanity is all one? What secret dream of “*being better than*” someone, needs to die before we can treat everyone on this planet with love and respect?

The disciples had to let their dream of a Ruler, an heroic Messiah who restored Jerusalem to the Jews, die before they could see the Anointed servant, Jesus, as a new model of a Messiah, one who showed them that it was OK to love everyone: those society said were

sick, or worthless, or evil. A Messiah who treated every single person: man, woman and child as if they had intrinsic worth.

Those first followers of Jesus had to bury the notion that they were the Chosen Ones, in order to see that God chooses everyone.

I'm sure it wasn't easy. Physical deaths are difficult enough for us humans, but letting negative thoughts about ourselves and others die - can seem nearly impossible. The only way we can really live, though, is to let our prejudices die.

And it's the only way to choose a resurrected life in Jesus. It's an amazing paradox really, that Jesus had to die to show us how alive we could be.

So why do we look for the living among the dead? Jesus is never there. Jesus is ALIVE.

And Jesus tells us, 'I can't physically be with you forever. But you're going to be okay and in fact, you're going to do AMAZING things!

All we need to do is to keep going and keep loving.

Or as our Presiding Bishop says:

*"Go forth into the world. Don't be afraid. Don't be ashamed to be a people called to love. And go forth into this world and help transform it from the nightmare it often is, into the dream that God intends.*

*GO! Cross boundaries, listen deeply and love like Jesus!"*

*Christ is risen! -----*

*And so can we be! Amen!*