

**Yes**

Rev. John Allen

As I am sure you know, we celebrate Easter every year.

There is plenty about this day that makes it familiar to us.

The tulips and lilies. The hymns we sing.

Growing up I remember one of the sure signs that Easter was coming was a dozen white eggs in our fridge, ready to be dyed. The rest of the year the eggs my parents brought home were always brown. It seemed like a small miracle.

And the fizz of the dye capsules in vinegar and the wire egg dippers that never worked quite as well as a spoon.

Perhaps you have some familiar rituals in your own family, a special food, or a place where you always go to celebrate. Familiar people who are with you year after year.

And yes, there is this story, perhaps the best one we know. We hear it each year.

Early in the morning while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb...

—

All of it together is a beautiful way to mark this moment in time, as the air warms and the crocuses crane their way upward through thawing earth.

And it a beautiful and stirring way to recall this most important proclamation in our faith. That Christ is Risen. That hope opens again and again. That not even death can hold back love.

The only problem is that packing all these things into one Spring weekend can leave us with the impression that Easter only comes once a year.

Like a birthday party, or an anniversary.

It can give us the feeling that Easter is simply a commemoration. A remembering of one great thing that happened long ago, in a garden on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

It could make us think that Easter only happens once a year.

The baskets and the plastic green grass goes back down into the basement. We go back to school and work. The jellybeans and chocolate bunnies all suddenly become half-price.

And we move on to something else until Easter comes again.

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If on July 9 or some other random day, someone were to ask you, is it Easter today? Anyone of us would say, “No.”

But what if we are wrong.

What if any day could be Easter Day?

Not the day when all of us together lift our voices as one and proclaim the good news at the heart of our faith.

But the ordinary day when that good news becomes real, on the ground, in your life.

Not just the day when we find the hidden eggs, but those days when the parts of our spirit that we had stowed away and forgotten came back to life.

Not the day when we had that special meal with everyone in our family all together, but maybe that one day when you can look up at the empty seat at your table and be surprised that the sting of grief has given way to grateful memories.

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In May of this past year, a couple who had escaped war in Syria were stuck for months in a refugee camp in Greece. When it became clear that they would be there for a while they decided that they could no longer keep their lives on hold. So by the light of Red Cross lanterns, in a canvas tent, they held their wedding.

It wasn't exactly as they planned. Still, a Doctor in the camp arranged the catering, other refugees fashioned beautiful decorations, others still provided the music, and one even reached into her own luggage, what little she had been able to cling to as she fled, to offer her own wedding dress for the occasion.

The couple was married. In the midst of all that uncertainty and grief.  
And in the photos, even if just for that moment. Everyone is smiling.

That was Easter day.

There is a woman whose story made headlines this year. She hid  
money from her abusive spouse for months, stashing it in between  
the pages of a book she knew he would never open. She knew she  
wanted to leave, but never knew how she would survive.

One day, she had enough, and after he fell asleep she rolled the stone  
away and left.

That was Easter Day.

There was a group of kids who were nearly shot in their classrooms.  
Afraid for their lives at school, they walked out into the streets asking  
adults to keep them safe. They lifted powerful voices, and help

stunning silence. Unwilling to let terror and fear be the end of their story, they inspired millions.

That was Easter Day.

There was a man, whose addiction seemed to stand on his shoulder and whisper in his ear. But he found friend, and then another, and then a community. He stood up at a meeting that night, to speak with his own voice that he had been sober for one day.

That was Easter Day.

There was a young boy who always struggled to make friends. He came home one day with the name of a classmate on his lips, and a spring in his step.

That was Easter day.

There was that one thing you needed to hear most of all, and that one person who knew you enough to say it.

There was that time when you wouldn't let yourself give up, not yet.

There was that time that you mustered enough hope for another day.

There was that time that you finally let yourself cry.

That time someone forgave you.

That time you got another chance.

That time you finally caught a break.

My guess would be that every day of the year, there is a moment like this in the world.

And that is what we are here to celebrate today.



Not that it happened once.

But that it is happening now.

That it will happen again.

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Wallace Steven's has a poem that begins this way:

“After the final no there comes a yes

And on that yes the future world depends.”

—

So what is the no that feels like the final no to you. What is the thing that you are convinced will never happen. Will never get better. Will never change. Will never come back?

Because every day is Easter.

I am not saying all your problems will vanish, or all your pain will be undone. But on the other side of that no, there is a yes. A yes, upon which the future depends.

Will that person you love come back to life? No.

Does your life continue, and does that love live on? Yes.

Will your addiction one day vanish? No.

Can you thrive despite it? Yes.

Did you get that job? No.

Does God have work for you in the world? Yes.

“After the final no there comes a yes

And on that yes the future world depends.”

—

Two thousand years ago, Jesus was teaching people like us.

He asked them to love their enemies, to welcome the foreigners.

He asked them to feed the hungry, to lift the lowly, to seek justice for the poor.

He asked them to live together in a new way, to share what they had, to live simply, and love extravagantly.

And the powerful people of this world had him bound and beaten.

They hung him on a cross high on a hill where the world could watch him die. Where the world could hear their emphatic answer: no.”

But early in the morning while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb. She saw the stone rolled away. She saw the clothes set

aside. She met the risen Christ in the guise of a gardener and she heard God say.

Yes.

Yes.

That is where we learned that God always speaks last, that love always triumphs in the end, that not even death can stop the power of God's love.

That's where we learned about it.

But it actually happens every day.