

Food for Risen Bodies



*On that final night, his meal was formal:
lamb with bitter leaves of endive, chervil,
bread with olive oil and jars of wine.*

*Now on Tiberias' shores he grills
a carp and catfish breakfast on a charcoal fire.*

*This is not hunger, this is resurrection:
He eats because he can, and wants to
taste the scales, the moist flakes of the sea,
to rub salt into his wounds.*

(Michael Symmons Roberts)

Holy Week and Easter 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

This poem takes us from Jesus' Passover supper on Thursday evening to the barbeque breakfast he prepares on the Galilean shore for his disciples after his resurrection. In it we are reminded of how important meal sharing with his friends was for Jesus. It is not hard for us to imagine the heaviness in the air on the Thursday evening, or the wonderful aroma of fish grilling on the fire at dawn a week or more later.

'This is not hunger, this is resurrection.'

This meal is so much more than just any breakfast – it is the beginning of resurrection life, and soon our Lord's friends will be ready to take on the world in the power of the Holy Spirit.

But in between the two meals there is a garden, a betrayal, a denial, a whipping, a crown of thorns, a purple robe, a cock's crow, a mockery of a trial, a walk to a hill, the hammering of nails, a stripping, and a gruesome, humiliating crucifixion.

There is a death, there is a tear in a curtain, there are tears, there is a pardon, there are prayers, there is a burial, there is a mother's sorrow, there is silence, there is darkness, there are angels, and there is an empty tomb.

We cannot arrive at the beach at sunrise for the meal of fish and joy, without first experiencing the bitterness of the three days between. In this extraordinary time in the world, as the corona virus holds us all in its grip, we are invited to be fully present to the events of the Triduum. In doing so we will find that the way of suffering and death leads to resurrection life.

I invite you all to make this week – with its highs and lows, a truly **Holy** one by participating fully in every moment of it – yes, even from your own living rooms. Join the crowd on Sunday and sing, "Hosanna to the King!" Wave green branches high. As we continue to Feast on the Word listen well to the story of the Passion and death of Jesus Christ as it is told through our gospel writers. Share in that Agape meal with loved ones and find ways of 'washing another's feet' through humble service. Join the procession to Calvary's hill and feel Christ's outstretched arms around you in love. Stand in the darkness on Easter Eve and watch the first light dawn. Then feast on all that Jesus offers on Sunday morning. Rejoice! Be hungry for Resurrection life. Be transformed!

On Easter Sunday morning join with the wider church in the ringing of bells at gam to share the good news of Jesus's resurrection to our communities and the world. Church bells ringing. Home bells ringing. Let's make a joyful noise!

Many of our churches have signs which say that church or worship is suspended or cancelled. Please change the wording on them to let your community know how grateful you are for all the frontline workers including hospital staff, grocery clerks, garbage pickup workers, postal workers. Invite community members to join in online worship by posting website links.

The diocese, clergy, wardens and treasurers are very aware of the financial difficulties that so many people in congregations are facing during COVID-19 with loss of employment and a decrease in investments. In recent meetings with parish leaders, I asked that everyone do their best to send in funds to cover the stipend and apportionment so that our clergy can continue to be paid. In the midst of all the challenges of this time there is still much to be grateful for, therefore, as you are able, please find ways to make your thank offering to God this Easter and to support the church financially in the weeks and months ahead.

Thank you for everything you are doing to stay faithful to your calling as disciples of Jesus and by continuing to reach out to each other and learning new ways of being church without a church building. I am inspired by your resourcefulness and creativity which is bringing renewed hope to many people who are on the periphery of our congregations. These are challenging times and sometimes its easy to give into despair, but God's promises and the assurance of God's abiding presence, which have sustained us in times past, will carry us through this time. Like yourselves I look forward to the day when we will meet together in person to feast on the Word and share in the Eucharistic meal.

I wish you and those you love a Blessed Holy Week and a Happy Easter!

+Anne