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St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Newton

Easter Primary Text: Matthew 28:1-10 Year A

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Some things are just better together, aren't they?

Abbot and Costello.

Bluey and Bingo.

Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock.

Galinda and Elphaba.

These duos are iconic.

They complement one another; they balance each other out.

Captain Kirk often brings the heart, whereas Mr. Spock provides logic.

Their relationship is often intense or deep,

Like Galinda and Elphaba's.

They could stand alone,

but why we want them to?

Iconic duos are greater than

the sum of their parts.

Hear me out— crucifixion and resurrection are an iconic duo.

Now today of all days I probably shouldn't talk about the cross, but I'm gonna.

The crucifixion, Jesus dying on a cross,

which we hear about on Palm Sunday & on Good Friday,

reveals a God who has experienced pain & suffering, firsthand.

While the alignment of the divine with folks who are suffering is always significant,

when we get to live through "historic times" with the mainstreamedness of violence

& casual disregard of life in the Middle East, Ukraine, Myanmar, Sudan,

And God help me, I can't give this sermon this year

without saying this out loud aloud,

even these United States—

When the world is on fire,

Where there are folks who are marginalized,

The cross' meaning becomes important

in a whole new way.

Jesus' crucifixion locates the chaotic, violent world at the center of God's work—  
 The world of seemingly unsolvable problems,  
 Of apparently irredeemable situations,  
 Of reprehensibly hopeless mistakes, intentional and unintentional,  
 of habits that we just can't seem to let go of,  
 even though we know better, **esp** when we know better;  
 of alleged micro-decisions w/ far reaching  
 consequences, consequences  
**way** more than we bargained for  
 of friends & family who  
 disappoint or hurt us,  
 of our secret doubts and fears.

The crucifixion locates all that crazy hurt front and center and then?  
 & then, with the empty tomb, with the resurrection,  
 with what we celebrate Easter Sunday, God says nope.  
 Absolutely not. The ick is not it  
 Ultimately, the world's agony, our own agony, will be shoved aside.

The cross, though important, has never been the point. Ever.  
 Focusing too much on the crucifixion would be like ending  
 Goldilocks & the Three Bears,  
 Right after the bears discover the broken chair—  
 It's simply the wrong place to stop.  
 The final act, the peanut butter to jelly's crucifixion,  
 is the resurrection.

Might we take heart by remembering how emotionally complicated  
 that first Easter had to have been?  
 Yes there was joy, but the predominant emotions must have been  
 fear, anxiety, exhaustion, w/ a healthy dose  
 of emotional whiplash to boot.  
 Even so, the women and the disciples, bless them,  
 somehow, eventually, through the grace of God  
 & by helping & encouraging one another  
 dared to hope that love,  
 represented by the resurrection,  
 Triumphs over bad—  
 The crucifixion.  
 The Easter is the cross' Rosetta Stone.

The resurrection tells us, that as awful as things might be sometimes,  
 and by God they sure can be, as much as it might feel like it's all crashing down,  
 the resurrection tells us that suffering and violence  
 will not always have the last word.

The ultimate, final word of God is and always will be love.

The empty tomb on Easter reveals a creative God,  
 unwilling to be contained by anything,  
 Including something as supremely universal  
 And supposedly final as death.

The resurrection is not an assurance that nothing will ever go wrong,  
 Because it does, as we know all too well.

Easter is not a promise that **everything** always turns out for the best,  
 Because if we're being honest, it doesn't an alarmingly amount of time  
 Rather, Easter, and the resurrection tells us that in the end—  
 and sometimes even before the end—  
 That in the end,  
 God's love triumphs.

So when we find yourself ourselves thinking, as we all do sometimes,  
 "What on earth is happening, I can't believe this, this is just awful"  
 great, that means you're paying attention,

Acknowledging the real realness of the world of the crucifixion,  
 the world of Good Friday.

And y'all, that can be good.

Faith was never meant to be

our own little individual escape hatch.

The pain & suffering are

just not the only reality,

Not the final reality.

So, again, maybe when we feel ourselves going down the depressive rabbit hole,

"What on earth is happening, I can't believe this, this is just awful"

What would it be like if we whispered to ourselves, "**The story's not over yet.**"

Whisper that and then do something small.

Inanely small.

Smaller than small.

**When we leave here today, let's plant seeds,** literal seeds  
 or metaphorical seeds of love and hope and joy,  
 something seemingly inconsequential,  
 Something that might maybe make a difference down the line,  
 whether we know it or not, whether we get to see it or not.

These will not all take root.  
 But some of them could.  
 Some of them likely will.  
 I do know nothing will ever grow if we don't try.

Iconic duos.  
 Mario and Luigi.  
 Hans Solo and Chewy.  
 Mustard and ketchup  
 Crucifixion and resurrection.  
 And maybe— just maybe—  
**What is happening?** and  
**The story is not over yet.**  
 And since the story isn't not over yet,  
 Plant good seeds of  
 what could come.  
**AMEN.**