

ST. JOSEPH SPIRITUAL MINISTRIES
A Congregation Ministry
of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston



Staying Connected in this Uncertain Time

As we carry on here at St. Joseph Spiritual Ministries in remote locations, we are taking some contemplative time to reflect on a favorite Scripture passage that has held meaning for us in past difficulties and what it may be saying or inviting us to look at in new ways during this global crisis.

The Road to Emmaus

Joan Duffy, CSJ

“Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place in these days?” (Luke 24:18)

Sometimes when we are searching for God there are many unanswered questions and unnamed stirrings within us. This was my experience as I prayed during Holy Week and continue my reflections in this Easter season. Some of these unanswered questions were found in Holy Week Services and Easter Liturgies. Some I experienced more deeply in ways of praying that involved music, poetry and art.

Unanswered questions such as:

Why is this night different from any other night? This is the question asked by the youngest child in the family during the Seder Supper during Passover.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord? This refrain was sung so poignantly on Good Friday during services held at St. Cecilia’s Parish in Boston.

Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.....

This year Eastern Point Retreat Center offered a virtual Holy Week Retreat for as many as 800 participants, which might have included many of you. In the reflections offered by Robert VerEecke, SJ on Holy Saturday, I prayed with a poem he had written entitled God’s Free Day.

*“I should have shunned this morning’s sunrise,
shouting
Go back where you came from?
What right do you have to rise
shedding light rays across the sea and sky?”*

For you and I are very familiar with the day that the sun refused to shine, when on Good Friday, the world was shrouded in darkness. Was this an unanswered question that silently waited for me and would not to go away until I found an answer? How could one ever shun the morning’s sunrise? My answer came while praying in the Motherhouse Chapel the afternoon of Holy Saturday, as I was stunned to see the sun shining in and out through the stained glass windows. Reminding me again of God’s Free Day.

“It was stunning,
you see
as every day when it dares to rise and
reminds me of another Rising.”

The unnamed stirrings of “Jesus is risen, Alleluia! Alleluia!”

During these days of the Pandemic, you and I ask the same questions as the disciples did on their way to Emmaus, for we all know of the things that are taking place these days. Our world is stretched to the point of fracture in the midst of sirens and ambulances, fear, concern over loved ones and being unable to ritualize celebrations of life and of eternal life. Yet, the Risen Christ is no longer the Stranger who has chosen to walk with us on this road to Emmaus.

“Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe” (Luke 24:25)

Gabriel’s Oboe was the theme song of the movie, *The Mission*. I listened to this moving song performed and recorded by a youth classical symphony from Poland. Its global message for all time and in all ages in these days of Covid-19 seemed to hold for me healing of all of the sadness and sorrow of our world and our hearts in God’s mercy, compassion and love.



Easter Morning by Casper David Friedrich, in the public domain.

James Martin, SJ, in his book *Jesus*, describes the words: “We had hoped that he was the one.” (Luke 24:21) to be the saddest words in the New Testament.

Whatever stretches you these days even to your limit, do not lose hope, for if we look, we can find hopefulness in nature and in many unexpected places.

One of the unexpected places where I found this hopefulness was in Easter Morning, a painting by Casper David Friedrich.

Blessings,
Joan Duffy, CSJ
Spiritual Director
Advisory Board, St. Joseph Spiritual Ministries