
See it? Paint the Picture

A sermon by Canon Wallace Marsh
Easter 2 – Year A

Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy. —1 Peter 1:3-9

During Holy Week, the clergy of the Diocese of Atlanta renew our ordination vows. This year, that service was held at St. David's, Roswell. So Tuesday of Holy Week, George, Cathy, Carolynne, and I rode up to St. David's, Roswell, and as we entered the church an usher held the door open for us.

As I thanked the usher, I stopped in my tracks.

The usher's name was Bill, a former parishioner of mine in Albany, Georgia. Bill was the senior warden when I was called to St. Paul's, and his wife, Caroline, was in my EfM group.

They were pillars of the parish, and the entire parish mourned their loss when they moved to Arizona to be closer to family. So, you can imagine my surprise when I realized that Bill wasn't in Arizona, but standing there holding the door open for me at St. David's, Roswell.

Seeing Bill and Caroline that day, hugging them, and catching up with them brought back so many wonderful memories. I would go so far as to say, it was a resurrection experience.

As I talked to Bill, I remembered all the challenges we faced in parish ministry, and how much we clergy relied on Bill's wisdom and optimistic spirit.

Yet, I also remembered the fun times. I recalled the rounds of golf we played together on Saturday morning, and the joy the winning team had depositing their winnings in the collection plate on Sunday, while the ushers from the losing team shook their heads in disbelief.

Seeing Bill and Caroline brought back so many memories.

All of us have had the experience of seeing someone or something and being flooded with memories.

We can recall spending time with a college or high school friend and re-living those memories as though they happened yesterday.

We can recall a time where we stumbled upon a sentimental object, and upon seeing that object, the memories of a loved one start returning.

When Jesus appears in that dark locked room in today's gospel, you have to imagine that the disciples were not only surprised, they were flooded with memories.

You have to imagine that their minds went back to those amazing events—the Sermon on the Mount, walking on water,

calming the sea, the raising of Lazarus, and the Last Supper.

But I also imagine they remembered those difficult memories—the betrayal of Judas, the arrest in the garden, and the horrific sight of the cross...something so terrible that only one of them stayed there to witness it.

Perhaps that is why Thomas says, I won't believe the resurrection unless I can see the mark of the nails and place my hands in his side. The memory of the cross was something that he could not overcome.

As Jesus stands before the disciples he reminds them of something he said earlier, "The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26).

That is why Jesus stands over the disciples and greets them with the words, "Peace be with you," then he breaths upon them, and reminds them about the gift of the spirit.

These disciples are locked in a dark room scared out of their minds, yet Jesus comes and stands before them and tells them they have been given something to do and now is the time to do it.

Now is time to get out of that room and tell others about the power of the resurrection. Now is the time to live life in the Spirit. Jesus wants the disciples to see that they have a purpose and now is time to live it!

And this brings me to the title of today's sermon, "See it? Paint the Picture."

Some of you know one of my favorite things to do is play golf.

Golf tends to make it into a lot of my sermons, especially in the spring, when golf season returns and I have a bad case of spring fever.

One of the professional golfers I enjoy watching is Jordan Spieth.

Jordan won the Masters and U.S. Open in 2015; and if you are a golfer from Georgia, you will never forget his meltdown on the back nine of Augusta National in 2016, in the final round of the Masters.

One of the reasons I enjoy watching Jordan, is because of the relationship he has with his caddie, Michael Greller, a former fifth and sixth grade math teacher from Washington state. The two have a chemistry that is like none other.

Let me tell you about something they do that relates to today's gospel.

When Jordan is facing a difficult golf shot, he will address the golf ball and Michael Greller will stand behind him, and ask Jordan if he sees the shot. Greller will say, "Do you see it?" Jordan responds with the words, "I see it. I see the shot."

Greller replies, "Paint it. Paint the picture." And then Greller steps away as Spieth makes his swing and hits a million dollar shot.

I love the image of Michael Greller and Jordan Spieth, and I can't help but wonder if Jesus isn't standing behind his disciples saying the same thing, "See it? Paint the picture."

Like the disciples, I imagine that many of us spend more time than we would like to admit living in dark rooms with locked doors.

Today's gospel reminds us that Jesus steps into the dark places of our lives. Jesus steps into those places and offers us a peace that passes all understanding, and gives us the gift of the Spirit.

Jesus stands behind each of us asking us if we see it! Do you see it? Do we see the life he has called us to live? Or, are we stuck in that dark and locked room?

The resurrection is not only about seeing the life we have been called to live, it is about knowing that through the gift of the Holy Spirit, Jesus has equipped us to go paint it...to go paint the picture!

Jesus calls us to leave our dark rooms and to be agents of change and resurrection in the world, to go seek and serve Christ in all people, to love our neighbor as yourself, to witness to the power of his life-giving spirit (to quote the Baptismal Covenant).

Our task as Easter people, our task as people who believe in the resurrection, is to see what others cannot see, and to go paint it! Paint the picture of the resurrection in your life. Paint the picture of the resurrection in the lives of those around you.

Do you see it? Paint the picture!

Alleluia. Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!

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