

***On the first day of the week . . . early in the morning, while it was still dark . . .***

Whose tomb are we talking about as we bend with Peter and John today – looking into an empty tomb? Obviously it's the tomb in which they placed Jesus, all wrapped in winding sheets, on Good Friday.

But then who is St. Paul talking about in his *Letter to the Romans* where he says: *We were indeed buried with him through baptism . . . so that just as Christ Jesus was raised from the dead . . . we too might live in newness of life.* He's talking about you and me! We may not be dead yet though often it feels like that and death still has dominion over us, considering, for one example, how much death proliferates (like a virus) throughout our media – the shootout at the O.K. Corral reiterated to an ever magnified and catastrophic degree from channel to channel, screen to screen, ever more ghastly – as entertainment!

It was the dominion of death in our world – not just natural but intentional death, as when we make a snide remark – that Paul had in mind. Far from being only a physical thing, death in so many ways has gripped us ever since Adam listened to a serpent – and we became suspicious of the world we live in and the people we live among. In our tendency to draw ourselves up short at whatever we are ignorant of or sense as hostile, we bury ourselves, enshroud ourselves – often ever so righteously. Society can become, as the prophet Ezekiel envisioned it, like a broad valley covered with dry bones.

And so we human beings await from generation to generation the arrival of someone whose life was not driven by suspicion, by an adversarial spirit, a wary sense of others and of Otherness as something to avoid or resist – including nature itself as something indifferent to us. *We are nature!* Everything that is and that we fashion out of nature is kin, our family! *Learn from the way the wild flowers grow . . .*, says Jesus. And: *I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you.* So simple a Gospel and yet Jesus was killed for proclaiming it in so many simple yet profound parables, even touching us in ways that can affect our being, our behavior - eucharistically. That healing touch so evident throughout the Gospel.

Since the day Peter and John found Christ's tomb empty we ourselves now have access day after day to the wider, deeper, astonishing world Christ inhabits. The stone has been rolled away, your burial clothes have been laid aside since your baptism – wake up to that fact – let today be *the first day of the week* of your life. Start by discovering the world around you. It has been waiting for you – as Paul says again: *We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even now . . .* as we progressively breach the waters of our baptism.

And then get to rediscover your spouse and then perhaps, if you have a gardener on a regular basis – take a little more time to look at *him*. With your eyes now wide awake, he – and everything else - may look quite different! As Mary Magdalene found out after Peter and John left the scene.

***Geoff Wood***