

Easter: An invitation to take faith seriously

One of the things kids hate to hear is, “You’ll understand when you’re older.” In fact, that’s probably also something adults hate to say, because we know that the reason we have to say it is because it’s difficult to put into words some of the most important truths life has taught us.

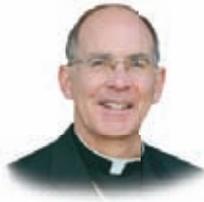
We know our words can’t begin to say certain things.

Haven’t we all had the experience of *knowing* and *believing* something — of being convinced of it and being willing to stake our lives on it — but found it impossible to put into words? I’m referring to the kinds of things that come from the experience of life’s hard knocks, or life’s deep joys or sorrows.

On the other hand, there are times when we envy the child’s direct and immediate way of understanding things we find hard to believe. Haven’t you ever seen something — with your own two eyes, clear as a bell, unmistakably — but missed its meaning?

Sometimes it’s difficult for us to accept truly good news — perhaps because life has hardened us or turned us into skeptics, or because we are always trying to analyze things and look for the hitch.

At those times we wish we had the



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direct understanding of a child.

Liberated from sin

From that first Easter Sunday, the Resurrection of Christ has been one of those truths which have evoked varying reactions. When the “beloved disciple” entered the empty tomb, he immediately

believed; for him seeing was believing.

On the other hand, the Gospels also tell us stories of disciples who saw Jesus after the Resurrection but found it difficult to believe it was he. Mary Magdalene at first thought he was the gardener! St. John tells us to remember that they did not yet understand the Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.

Yes, it is historical fact: The Lord Jesus, the Son of God and Savior of the world, died a painful death on a cross and three days later rose from the dead. He will come again in glory, and we await his return at the end of time.

I am often struck by the excited, spontaneous responses evoked by Je-

sus in those who encountered him.

Hearing his call, fishermen abandoned family and trade; touched by his healing hand — and despite his plea to the contrary — the healed went forth to speak his praises; liberated from the weight of sin by his unbounded mercy, the forgiven leapt in joyful freedom; sensing his authenticity and clarity, skeptics dropped their sarcasm and surrendered to him; seeing the truth of his Way, sinners repented and never returned to their former ways.

Reflecting on such spontaneity, I ask myself: Am I as quick to follow Jesus, to proclaim him, to persevere in freedom? After all, I am every bit as much called, healed and forgiven as they.

Easter is an invitation

John reports that Jesus’ Resurrection evoked just such excitement in Mary Magdalene, Peter and the beloved disciple. Mary “ran” to tell Peter, who with the other disciple “ran” to see for themselves. Seeing, breathless, they believed.

The implications of his rising are enormous: Not simply a rabbi, a healer, a reconciler, Jesus is God’s Son, who

destroyed the grasp of death, ransomed us from slavery to sin and opened the door to eternal life. Death itself died on the cross. There is only life for those who follow the risen Lord.

Am I slow to understand the Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead, or will I run in his ways, proclaiming his Resurrection by a changed life?

Easter is an invitation to take faith seriously, to recommit ourselves to its practice every day. The good news is that each time we do so, and each time we fail but try again, we are taking a step through the door, Jesus Christ, to heaven.

Living our faith and trusting in its truth, especially when the going gets rough, we find that our faith deepens. Faith is for believing, but it is also for living.

Faith helps us see everything as it really is, in God’s eyes. “Jesus said to them ... believe in the light, so that you may become children of the light” (see Jn 12:35–36).

Happy Easter! May Christ’s victory over death fill you with light and hope, and may you find in him the fulfillment of your deepest longing.

DO YOU HAVE AN INTENTION FOR ARCHBISHOP SARTAIN’S PRAYER LIST?

You may send it to him at Archbishop Sertain’s Prayer List, Archdiocese of Seattle, 710 Ninth Ave., Seattle, WA 98104.