

May the words of my mouth, and the meditations of all our hearts, be now and always acceptable unto You, O Lord our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

How many people here like Easter eggs?
How many of the children here have already had a good healthy breakfast of sugar and cocoa powder with a little dose of food colouring on the side? How many adults have had to help out along the way ... just to make sure of course that the children don't get too much of a sugar rush before church? The great thing about being a Grandparent is that when I've fed them too much sugar the mother and father get to take them home and deal with the aftermath!

I'm not one of those who likes easter eggs all that much. I don't mind chocolate. In fact, I quite like chocolate ... the darker the better! The thing about easter eggs for me though is that the promise is never as good as the reality. Christine and I used to get our kids painting proper eggs instead ... that was fun. But don't be tempted to try and eat them afterwards ... food colouring flavoured egg white just tastes weird.

Real eggs come with three layers: a hard outer shell, a lovely yellow tasty centre and sloppy white goop in between. The hard outer shell serves two mutually supporting purposes: it keeps the inside in and the outside out. From the outside the shell itself looks beautiful but uninviting. It reveals no hint of the tasty centre at its heart. It puts up only feeble resistance to pressure, especially if it comes under a point attack. And when it breaks, it shatters and pollutes everything that remains, both inside and out. Have you ever tried to get hold of broken eggshell from a liquid cake mixture?

The shell however also keeps the inside of the egg sterile. It frames the whole and gives the egg shape and value. The shell also helps identify one egg from every other ... its size, curve and colour distinguish it from

other types of egg. It seems to me that this component is the egg's *Beauty*?

The white goop inside the egg, the albumen, keeps both the other two parts alive. It doesn't look good and, until it is cooked, it doesn't taste good either, but it is the meaty part and is essential to the whole. Despite its bland taste, the white is the *Goodness* of the egg.

But the centre is where it's at. The yolk that you dip yours soldiers into. The bit you cut through to take your asparagus to new levels of gastronomic delight. The bit that completes the bacon on your plate. This is the bit where new life actually forms and grows. This is the real purpose, the *Truth* in all creation.

But very little of this combined *Truth Beauty and Goodness* is obvious at the beginning. We take it on faith, perhaps even for granted, that the egg we will take from the fridge tomorrow morning, will deliver our fullest expectations ... every time. The joy of Easter eggs, without the distraction of chocolate, is that we get to experience the very essence of creation up close and personal each and every time.

In a similar way, the gospel today fills our imagination. When the women arrive in the early dawn "*while it was still dark*" the tomb is open. The imagery of pre-dawn darkness implies a general state of grief and despair; the women were very distraught about what had happened and uncertain about what lay ahead. But as daylight strengthens so they begin to see a new Truth laid out before them, and they emerge from despair into joy!

This is really the first we see of Mary Magdalene in John's gospel. Yes, she was at the foot of Jesus' cross with His mother and

some others on Friday, but here she plays a critical role. She is spoken to by angels and is the first person to actually recognise, speak to and touch Jesus after His resurrection! Seeing becomes believing!

The first thing that Peter and John notice, is the clothes that Jesus had been laid out in. I came across a description this week of how they might have looked. What Peter saw was nothing like the way a teenager leaves his cast-offs strewn across a bedroom floor. Jesus simply disappeared from within His shroud ... the strips of cloth that were wound around him just collapsed onto themselves. Remember when Lazarus came out of his tomb after four days? Several people had to help him out of them. That wasn't necessary in this case.

Jesus' resurrection is the simplest and best explanation of His disappearance. If it was at all possible to identify a dead body as Jesus' after his resurrection, the Roman authorities and the Jewish leaders would have done so and killed our story in a heartbeat. *No resurrection ... no Christian church!* And Paul says that more than 500 people that *saw Jesus* in various places and in different circumstances during the period between Easter and the Ascension (but interestingly he doesn't include Mary in that number).

This is by far the greatest moment in human history ... the Son of God, Who had been crucified in the most publicly humiliating way, and confirmed dead by the authorities who had a vested interest in Him being so ... then physically came back to life, albeit in a form that we can't fully understand this side of our own elevation to eternity.

There are some things that I'm happy to just accept on faith: for example, I'm happy that the Truth, Beauty and Goodness of eggs is a metaphor for the whole of God's creation, and I'm happy with Jesus' resurrection as the simplest and best explanation of His disappearance from the tomb. This doesn't

absolve us from continuing to try to think about and understand what happened so that we can help others by explaining at best an unusual story, but without faith, the story lacks context.

This is not only the greatest moment in human history ... but it is also the greatest love story in history:

For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life.

And all we have to do claim this gift is love God as He loves us ... with all our strength and heart and mind ... and love others as ourselves. Easy!

Amen.