

Moving Toward Easter Joy



As we move through the Lenten journey, is anything happening? Have we experienced the presence of God within us, among us? This is no exam with answers graded. It's a glimpse of who we are and what we do. Has our inner loneliness and poverty of spirit, our hunger for peace and joy found renewed energy to face life's difficulties and challenges, resolved in spirit to be a new creation?

We desire this deeply. We experience the passion and death of Jesus, eager to be with Him by our commitment to take up our cross and follow Him into resurrected life, the fulfillment of God calling us daughters and sons. This happens when a person opens self up to the Spirit Who hungers to enlighten and inspire our welcoming the kingdom into our hearts. Un-

derstanding this, we become “new creations” because we participate in the on-going building of the kingdom as witnesses to Christ and servants of God.

Holy Week, we accompany Jesus in His triumphal entry into Jerusalem and His brutally painful carrying of a cross to Calvary. All said, thus far, cannot happen to us until and unless we freely and generously respond to our Lord's invitation: “Come, follow Me.”

As ever, human fickleness easily gives way to “following the crowd,” doing what everyone else does. This fills the story, our lives, with sadness, shame and fear. We can identify with Peter and Judas, the high priests, and Pilate, the shouting mob and the wailing women, the frightened Apostles and the sorrowing mother of Jesus whom we desire to



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support. The mystery of God's love is too personal to comprehend. Dare we believe it is meant for me?

We must answer, privately and personally. Therein lies our path into the future. Therein lies the decisions defining who we are, and what we seek to do and be. Judas recognized his betrayal. In his remorse, he could not believe Jesus would forgive him: a continuation of his inability to accept the love and friendship of Jesus. Peter denied Jesus and wept bitterly. But, he relied on Jesus' love, repented and was chosen to represent Jesus to the world. No matter where we stand now, what we accept and do can lead to true Easter Joy. Embrace it!