

Christ has risen Alleluia Alleluia quite a ring to it. This evening I want to touch on why this phrase inspires strength and hope within me, and maybe share a bit of that hope with you all. As some of you might know I attended a Jesuit college, and it has certainly helped form my understanding of our Christian mission here on earth. One of the core Jesuit values is the concept of Solidarity. It is something that can make meaning out of suffering without glorifying the act of suffering which is important. Suffering on its own does not accomplish much but when in solidarity it becomes meaningful since it is in service of another, and becomes an act of love. Or as the Theologian Edward Schillebeeckx puts it, quote "Suffering is not redemptive in itself. But it is redemptive when it is suffering through and for others, for man's cause as the cause of the one who says that he is "in solidarity with my people" end quote. The world today continues to remind us there is immense suffering in this world and most of it is out of our control but we can at least try to make sure the suffering don't suffer alone. Opening oneself up to the pain of a fellow being can bring them comfort and push us to greater lengths to alleviate their needs. I find Solidarity is especially present in queer Christian life, we all have unique stories but often have overlapping chapters of finding self-acceptance, coming out, facing condemnation from others. These shared experiences help us as a community to hold our fellow LGBT siblings in prayer and support as they write their own difficult chapters. And I consider myself very blessed and grateful for the solidarity and comfort you all showed me as I came out to my family last year.

We see this concept of solidarity in 40's days we just spent in lent. Modeled off of Christ's 40s in the desert, Lent is about preparation for the next step. Christ embraced his humanity wholeheartedly uniting himself with the afflictions that accompany humanity. Experiencing afflictions of the body through fasting and living in the desert, and afflictions of the mind with the temptations at the end. This experience was about embracing solidarity, intimately learning the afflictions of the souls Christ was to bring the good news too. Fully understanding the anguish behind Moses's cries for help at the shores of the red sea, as we heard in the reading from exodus. At the end of the 40 days we see Christ equipped with this understanding of solidarity, embark to Galilee to start his mission of hope to the outcasts and downtrodden.

Christ's mission of radical love pushed a lot of boundaries, advocating and modeling new societal structure that included all, bringing the unclean, the tax collectors, the prostitutes, all to the same diverse table. Christ gave moral teaching but all in service of alleviating the suffering of others, thus starting a revolutionary movement of love in service of those in need. The disruption caused by this gospel of radical solidarity ultimately led to Christ's betrayal and brutal death on the Cross that we just reflected on yesterday. An all powerful God of Love can't need death to create change; yet this violent death occurs, a heartbreaking consequence of a radical mission. With this needless death it leaves me wondering what meaning does the resurrection bring?

I think the gospel today can shed some light on this. We see Mary of Magdala and Mother Mary come to the tomb and finding it empty the angel tells them "Jesus has been raised, exactly as it was foretold. Come and see the burial place. Then go quickly and tell the disciples that Jesus has risen from the dead and now goes ahead of you to Galilee. You will see Jesus there." Galilee here is significant, we saw Christ go there to start his public ministry after the 40 days and the majority of his ministry was in Galilee. Upon resurrection, Christ did not stick around instead he immediately went back to continue his gospel work. Christ had started a new beginning but it was unfinished; his followers were too afraid without him and needed Christ to guide them. One of my Jesuit friends Fr. Reiser puts it well quote "The raising of Jesus places him squarely among his people, to "raise" them from their fallenness and disgrace, to raise up their hopes, to lift up their broken spirits, to raise up prophets and guides from their midst, to breath movement into ancient bones and energy into tired limbs" end quote Yes there might have been a brutal crucifixion but love rose Christ up to continue his service of the marginalized, inviting his followers to do the same and meet him in Galilee. And as we heard earlier quite beautifully from Ezekiel this act of following can be quite transformative "I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you; I will remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh." Let us remember this and be emboldened to continue this mission of radical solidarity lifting up the marginalized around us, find our Galilee accepting that it can be daunting certainly the disciples felt the same way but know you are not fighting for this mission alone because Christ has risen Alleluia Alleluia!