

Jesus' Bodily Resurrection

Sunday, April 1, 2018

Feast of Easter

The risen Christ is the standing icon of humanity in its full and final destiny. He is the pledge and guarantee of what God will do with all our crucifixions. At last we can meaningfully live with hope. It is no longer an absurd or tragic universe. *Our hurts now become the home for our greatest hopes.* Without such implanted hope, it is very hard not to be cynical, bitter, and tired by the second half of our lives.

It is no accident that Luke's Resurrection account in the Gospel has Jesus saying, "I am not a ghost! I have flesh and bones, as you can see" (see Luke 24:39-43). To Thomas he says, "Put your finger in the wounds!" (John 20:27). In other words, "I am human!"—which means to be wounded and resurrected at the same time. Christ returns to his physical body, and yet he is now unlimited by space or time and is without any regret or recrimination while still, ironically, carrying his wounds. "Before God, our wounds are our glory," as Lady Julian of Norwich reflected. [1]

That Jesus' physical wounds do not disappear is telling. The mystical, counterintuitive message of death and resurrection is powerfully communicated through symbol. The major point is that Jesus has not left the human sphere; he is revealing the goal, the fullness, and the purpose of humanity itself, which is "that we are able to share in the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4), even in this wounded and wounding world. Yes, resurrection is saying something about Jesus, but it is also saying a lot about us, which is even harder to believe. It is saying that we also are larger than life, Being Itself, and therefore made for something good, united, and beautiful. Our code word for that is *heaven*.

Many do believe in the bodily resurrection, as do I. But, in a way, that asks little except a mere intellectual assertion of a religious doctrine. We can go much further than that. I choose to believe in some kind of bodily resurrection because it localizes the Christ mystery in this material and earthly world and in our own bodies, the only world we know and the world that God created and loves.

[1] Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, chapter 39.

Adapted from Richard Rohr, *Immortal Diamond: The Search for Our True Self* (Jossey-Bass: 2013), 84-85, 87.