

# I AM WISDOM ELIMINATES FEAR AND DOUBT

"We proclaim the resurrection of Christ when his light illuminates  
the dark moments of our existence.

Pope Francis

## FAMILY TRADITION

There will be no surprise if you question what family traditions have to do with eliminating fear and doubt. As with all the focuses in this series, they are connection events leading to learning experiences.

Wisdom does indeed come for multiple familiarities. It is evident to me that Easter traditions influenced my life as much as Christmas, my birthday, and summer bible study camps, and weekend church retreats. All were enormous inspirations for me.

Bertie McIlvain (my mother for those of you who haven't known me long) was amazingly ritualistic in regard to celebrating the Christian festivities. For me, Easter began Monday following Palm Sunday. For my entire elementary, junior high, and high school years, I was ceremoniously loaded in the family Dodge or Pontiac and driven the seven miles into Pampa to visit Dunlap's and/or JC Penney's to buy my Easter "outfit."

In addition to nice clothes for Easter Sunday, we stocked up on clothes for when I returned to school the following year. Because of the time between April and September, everything I tried on that fit in April was put back and two sizes larger were purchased. The reason was the need for them to "fit throughout the next school year." It was embarrassing enough that I had to roll up the Levi's legs and wear a belt with a leather punched hole beyond the tightest fit of the belt, but gym class was a total embarrassment. I was a skinny little kid anyway, but put two size larger gym shorts and tee shirt on me and I looked like a two-legged scare a crow with big button eyes and curly brown straw hair.

Every year, Bertie bought her own corsage and a boutonniere each for my Dad and me. All my brothers were out of the house before I started school, so I was the focus for her "Looking handsome on Easter" traditions. Each Easter from six years to eighteen years old, I was awakened early to be certain I was the "most handsome" in Kingsmill Community Apostolic Faith Church that Easter Sunday morning.

Everything was focused on teaching me the significance of Jesus' sacrifice for my sins and the gift of eternal life. It is a good thing I had twelve years to learn the intent of all the new clothes and specific things we did as a family, including driving to the White Deer cometary to visit my brother Vaughn Dearol who died eighteen days before my

fourth birthday. Every holiday, we went to leave flowers, tidy up the little lot purchased and reserved for Tommie, Bertie, Bill, Vaughn, EJay and of course Teddy. Half of the “resting places” have been used and the rest of the lot will be vacant. It was a ritual that is not easily forgotten but reinforced the importance of family rituals.

Even as a youngster, I wrote in a journal whenever I could remember to do it. The date on the page I’m quoting was March 28, 1958 two days before Palm Sunday. I was nine years old and for as long as I could remember, my brother EJay was home from Rice University in Houston for Easter and Christmas. My notes said, “EJay called today and I’m sad. Mom made Mrs. Harris and Mrs. Franks hang up their phones.”

They were two of eight families, including us, on the party line. At any given phone call, we could have seven other people listening to our conversation. So the fact that I recorded the two most nosey being asked to “get off” was memorable.

After a short time listening to Mom ask EJay about school and basketball and how he had been feeling, she said “What time tomorrow do you think you will be home.” EJay said, “That’s why I’m calling Mom. My friends and I are going to spend spring break in Corpus Christy this year. I won’t be going home this year.” I wrote, “I heard mom inhale and all three of us were silent. After a little while mom said, ‘But you always come home for Easter.’ I cried.” And there my journal words for that day ended.

When we make special days important to us as family, and our Church family, we are creating lasting memories and bonds that hold us together. Caroline Kennedy wrote these words in regard to Christmas, and I believe they summarize the Easter influences I’m writing here today:

*It's true, Christmas can feel like a lot of work, particularly for mothers. But when you look back on all the Christmases in your life, you'll find you've created family traditions and lasting memories. Those memories, good and bad, are really what help to keep a family together over the long haul.*

Caroline Kennedy

*Peace Always*  
*Ted*