

So, I think I finally encountered something that allowed me insight into the disciples' experience of Golgotha and Easter Sunday. It is none other than the recent presidential election. I don't mean to be disrespectful, sarcastic or even trite. The clearest way to say it is that Tuesday night seemed like a death knell. What appears to be taking shape is nothing short of a resurrection three days later due to millions of early ballots being counted. While it is obvious that I support Joe Biden, I write this not to revel in his apparent victory. I write this because the experience of the past days has been filled with the roller coaster of emotions from despair to hope, from the sinking feeling in my gut to the breath of fresh air blowing through the house, from abject misery to holding out the possibility that a catastrophe has been avoided.

It goes without saying that there is no silver bullet or perfect candidate. We will not experience Nirvana in a Biden administration. However, from where I stand, the very foundations of our democracy--responsible government and our trusted institutions of law, science, and human services--was threatened if a change in presidential leadership did not take place. The fact that the current President continues to spew lies in the face of almost certain defeat underscores the vapid, vile, and venal nature of his person and his administration.

While my experience of the past three days had everything to do with the candidates involved, I recognize a scenario in which the tables are turned and those whom I consider polar opposites would be relishing in the same way. I, as they are now, would be despairing. Which raises the specter of how thoroughly divided our country is. So, while I give thanks for what looks like a Biden win, I am acutely aware of the unbelievably heavy lift that is necessary to move our country back to civility and productive discourse. The facts tell it all: Joe Biden, if he wins, will receive the most votes of anyone in electoral history. Donald Trump, if he loses, will receive the second most votes of anyone in electoral history. The choice could not be any starker, the stakes any higher, and the split any more chasmatic

Which is, perhaps, the bigger story of this election. Yes, an important change in leadership has taken place. However, if the entrenchment does not stop, we are doomed. I do not recognize the country that I inhabit. That so many tens of millions of people can support a moderate Democrat, and tens of millions of others can back a right-wing radical who has lied, cheated, and corrupted his way through four years. Not only that, but they support him to the point of actively espousing violence toward those who are tasked with the civic duty that we hold sacred of confirming the vote, whether in Michigan, Pennsylvania, or Nevada.

It is easy for me to look at images on the television screen and scorn the actions of such people (and I do denounce their actions). However, I also am aware that the survival of our Republic depends upon the ability of citizens to work across differences to achieve opportunity and progress. Thus, part of what I realize in the reporting over the past few days is that while my candidate may have been resurrected, the jury is still out as to whether or not our country is still

in the tomb. Which also makes me think of the disciples on Easter Sunday. With the return of their friend and Lord, it would seem that everything was extraordinary. And, yet, we know that everything was not so. The disciples feared for their life. They were unsure how to proceed. As they moved farther away from the resurrection experience, they struggled to work together to embody that experience to others.

So, perhaps we are in a similar place. A dangerous--and deadly on many levels--moment has been avoided. New life emerges. Yet, there is so much more to do. And I believe that Christians in particular and religious types in general have a role to play in the work that we do beyond the resurrection. The reconciling of our country and moving beyond the demagoguery of the 45th President as well as seeing the fear-driving-the-anger-and-hostility of his followers is hard work. It is not enough to simply write off those who appear to have voted for the loser of this election. Rather than reside in the echo chambers of our firmly held positions on social media, is there a way to begin to humanize those with whom we disagree? Is there a way to build relationships that seek understanding? Is there a way to find common ground for work in our immediate communities and for the country? Some may say, "No." However, I know that if we don't, we only continue the return to the grave that we barely missed this time.