



Reflection for Eastertide

Idea: This material could provide an excellent Reflection in an isolated Parish at a Sunday Liturgy of the Word (with/without Communion) during Eastertide. The extract by Richard Rohr sums up the whole Lent/Passion/Easter event, the entire journey of the Paschal Mystery to which we are called to be faithful.

This piece could equally be used effectively with a small Spirituality sharing group. Read it first, then reflect on it in silence. Underline what seems most important to you. Then take some time to share. Sum up the sharing by singing an Easter hymn or praying together in the words of the Opening Prayer from the Sunday Mass according to the week when you are meeting.

Jesus and the Cross

Coincidence of Opposites

The Divine Mind transforms all human suffering by identifying completely with the human predicament and standing in full solidarity with it from beginning to end. This is the real meaning of the crucifixion. The cross is not just a singular event. It's a statement from God that *reality has a cruciform pattern*. Jesus was killed in a collision of cross-purposes, conflicting interests, and half-truths, caught between the demands of an empire and the religious establishment of his day. The cross was the price Jesus paid for living in a "mixed" world, which is both human and divine, simultaneously broken and utterly whole. He hung between a good thief and a bad thief, between heaven and earth, inside of both humanity and divinity, a male body with a feminine soul, utterly whole and yet utterly disfigured—holding together all the primary opposites (see Colossians 1:15-20).

In so doing, Jesus demonstrated that Reality is not meaningless and absurd just because it isn't perfectly logical, fair, or consistent. Reality, we know, is always filled with contradictions, what St. Bonaventure and others (such as Alan of Lille [c. 1128–1202/03] and Nicholas of Cusa [1401–1464]) called the "coincidence of opposites." This is what we all resist and oppose much of our life.

Jesus the Christ, in his crucifixion and resurrection, "recapitulated all things in himself, everything in heaven and everything on earth" (Ephesians 1:10). This one verse is the summary of Franciscan

Christology. Jesus agreed to carry the mystery of universal suffering. He allowed it to change him (“Resurrection”) and us, too, so that we would be freed from the endless cycle of projecting our pain elsewhere or remaining trapped inside of it.

This is the fully resurrected life, the only way to be happy, free, loving, and therefore “saved.” In effect, Jesus was saying, “If I can trust it, you can too.” We are indeed saved by the cross—more than we realize. The people who hold the contradictions and resolve them in themselves are the saviors of the world. They are the only real agents of transformation, reconciliation, and newness.

Christians are meant to be the visible compassion of God on earth more than “those who are going to heaven.” They are the leaven who agree to share the fate of God for the life of the world now, and thus keep the whole batch of dough from falling back on itself. A Christian is invited, not required, to accept and live the cruciform shape of all reality. It is not a duty or even a requirement as much as *a free vocation*. Some people feel called and agree to not hide from the dark side of things or the rejected group, but in fact draw close to the pain of the world and allow it to radically change their perspective. They agree to embrace the imperfection and even the injustices of our world, allowing these situations to change them from the inside out, which is the only way things are changed anyway.

Adapted from Richard Rohr, [The Universal Christ: How a Forgotten Reality Can Change Everything We See, Hope For, and Believe](#) (Convergent: 2019), 147-148.

Some helpful questions to ask:

- What insights have you gained from this extract?
- What does Rohr mean by ‘holding together all the primary opposites’?
- If we could do this in everyday life, what changes would we see?
- Rohr explains Resurrection as an event that can free us from ‘from the endless cycle of projecting our pain elsewhere or remaining trapped inside of it.’ How new is this view of the Resurrection for you?
- What would you need to change in order to live a ‘resurrected life’ today?