

Easter Vigil:

On this holiest of nights, I want to be a little doubtful about God. Not about the resurrection. We can argue about that later, if you want.

Rather, at this Easter vigil, I want to say to you and to God that God could never be accused of being a great movie maker (well, really, it's the people who wrote that Gospels that I'm speaking of, but hopefully, they were working for God, even if they weren't writing down word for word what God told them). Cinematography, God gets, I think. But at a very rudimentary level, God does not understand plot. Every really good movie plot works like this: We identify with a character. That character is wronged by an evil person or entity. We hope and pray that the person we like will get revenge on the person whom we do not like, and when he or she does, we reach the climax wherein we find release. We reach catharsis. Roll the credits. Give out an Oscar, as long as you do it in 3D.

God seemingly does not play that game. In the gospels, anyway, we are often confused as to who is good and who is bad. Most are a mix. The people we even like, like John the Baptist, Peter, and the disciples, often do not get it right and end up betraying Jesus himself. And the people who seem the most powerful and EVIL, like Pontius Pilate, are revealed to be weaker than a crowd screaming outside his palace, even as he personally does not want Jesus killed. And Jesus, the guy who is wronged, never does get revenge. He never comes back with an axe. He does come back. And everyone is scared. And just when we think it will be really good, he just forgives everyone. Game Over. And that alone is what brings him back to life and has him evade death. Forgiveness does not translate to a good blow up scene.

No, God is no moviemaker. If God were a good moviemaker, he would smite our enemies and lavish us righteous with gifts and goodness. Surely, we're all righteous gathered here, right?

Luckily, I do not want to follow a moviemaker or at least that kind of moviemaker. And luckily, I think that we have a new kind of catharsis. I think that God is working a new plotline. And the catharsis is that in a world that often feels unstoppable, unwinnable, and very violent, we have a bread crumb trail to a different life. We have the bread crumb trail of Jesus, a man who shows us how to approach the evil in the world and in ourselves, with forgiveness. Forgiveness of those who deserve it. Forgiveness for those who do not.

And somehow, we trust that in the darkness of life, this brings us to resurrection.

A few moments ago, many of us renewed our baptismal promises. We promised to do this work, to forgive, to be a part of this new, larger family called the human family. And I honestly believe that part of that work is to pay attention to this new plot line, and to work toward writing it in our own lives. Because God has given the plot line to us. We can have the old same one. We can seek revenge. We can picture

ourselves as righteous while others are not. And we can have nuclear meltdown. Or we can come to the joy of the resurrection in which we treat all people with love and respect, perhaps even healthcare. And we treat with love and respect the people who work against us and God.

I hope that since you came out tonight, that you seek resurrection. I hope that we gather around the feast in Joy and with Alleluias. We have seen the hope for our world. Many have trashed it. Others cannot believe in it, but it is our vision, and our hope. And tonight, we pledge to make this new plotline happen.

Amen