

SALT CO

4.28.24

Via Lucis: Following the Way of the Resurrection

“But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said.’ Matthew 28:5-6a

WELCOME TO THE SALT CO!

When we say “Seasoned Adults” we mean this in two ways:

SEASONED AS IN...

Chronologically-- we’ve lived a lot of seasons of life.

BUT more importantly-

Spiritually--- ...like when sodium and chlorine combined make SALT... by the grace of God, when we receive Christ into our lives we become like THIS [gesture: one hand—two hands—joined together]

We become something beautiful, a *new creation*...transformed and *transforming* for the rest of our lives.

JESUS CALLS US THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

It’s a kind of calling, isn’t it?

So, we call this the SALT CO—situated alongside Route 60+ where we pull over-to share some stories of our journeys—to refresh, retool and REFUEL...

For example, on Good Friday we were invited to take the Journey to the Cross following fourteen stations given us by the Gospel witness. How many took the Journey this year? We heard stories of families standing, sometimes kneeling together looking at a station, the art, reading the scripture, whispering, children asking questions. Some just stood and looked for a long time- gazing.

Gazing is not something we do quickly. More on that in a bit.

The fourteen stations invited us on a journey, didn't they? At first you take in the scene, you read the scripture, and then, if you take a moment and let what happened there begin to happen "in here", you notice something. Maybe questions rising. Maybe pure gratitude. Or weeping. Or prayer.

The Church has been practicing doing the Stations of the Cross for centuries.

Recently a new tradition has begun that complements the Stations of the Cross. It was first proposed by an Italian Catholic priest in 1990 called *Stations of the Resurrection*, or *Via Lucis*, Latin for the "Way of Light". Just as the Journey to the Cross, the Stations of the Resurrection are all based in the witness of the Gospels, the book of Acts, and Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.

Today and for the rest of our season SALT CO will follow the VIA LUCIS through the first four Stations of the Resurrection.

Why? I love how the apostle Paul puts it as the conclusion of his long chapter on the resurrection of Jesus:

“Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”

I Corinthians 15:58

Christianity is not a religion. It is a “movement”. Movements don’t begin with a big idea. Or even by a charismatic leader. For a movement to launch, *something has to happen*.

What launched the Christian movement was the resurrection of Jesus. Put it this way, if Jesus hadn’t risen, there would have been no reason to write the New Testament. Others who claimed to be messiah in the first century have disappeared from popular history. We can say,

The resurrection of Jesus has literally changed the course of world history.

It’s a movement. And you and I are swept up in it.

The 14 Stations of the Resurrection serve as a powerful reminder of His presence then, but also *now*. Remember what our Lord told His followers, the last verse of Matthew’s Gospel,

“And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:20

The Way of Light helps us remember that Jesus is here! AND *in that remembering* our faithful imaginations become attuned to seeing how He is with us NOW! *You and I live in* the ERA between ALREADY and NOT YET, after his 1st appearing and before His promised 2nd

appearing--**when he will complete the redemptive work He started when He came—died—and rose.** That great day when he will FINALLY set all things RIGHT. All things will be made new, including these bodies of ours.

Before we dive in, I think it will be helpful to have the “back story”. Take a look at this from the Bible Project on Luke’s witness.

<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=the+bible+project+on+the+resurrection&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:db0e0564,vid:Vb24Lk1Oh5M,st:0>

In a very real way, we are in a similar place as those first followers of Jesus who encountered him after He rose. We, like they, find we are trying to wrap our heads, and hearts around what His resurrection means for our lives.

Via Lucis invites us to fire our faithful imaginations to notice His presence every day.

I propose that each “station” is more like a “window” through which we can see “out”, but also through which what is “out” there shines “in” on us. Maybe you got a sense of this in the Stations of the Cross too.

So, now, to prepare.

Today we are going to practice “gazing”. We already do this but perhaps without thinking much about it.

Millions moved into position to gaze at the recent full solar eclipse. We gaze at a sunset. At the starry night sky. At the face of a beaming child- sometimes we say, *“I can’t take my eyes off her face...”*

Dr. Curt Thompson describes an experience of gazing at piece of art for a long time.

“It is difficult to put into words, but I can say that my experience in persevering with Rothko’s work first led, after about fifteen minutes, to my becoming aware of the layers of color present in the painting. There weren’t, as it turned out, only three bands- two navy and one royal blue- as it first appeared. Rather, there were multiple hues and areas where the paint had run, and the borders between the bands of color were not nearly as sharp as they appeared at first glance. After about twenty minutes, I began to experience an emotional surge, which I can only describe as a sense that I was being ‘seen’ by the painting- almost as if I were swimming in it, being enveloped by it.

Now, you might be wondering, ‘Is this guy sane? He thinks he was ‘seen’ by a painting?’ I don’t mean I believe the painting was ‘looking’ at me, as if it were a sentient being. Rather, I experienced the same feeling I do when I feel seen with grace and compassion by another person. The point is that in order for any of this to happen, for my having any chance at all to encounter and be encountered by something in a way I would not have predicted, I had to persevere. I needed to remain seated in one place for an extended period of time. Not so that I could ‘work harder’ to see what I had not seen before- using my analytic, left-brain function- but so that I could relax and permit whatever I sensed to come to me without my trying to ‘figure it out’- a more prominently right-brain function.”

Soul of Desire, pp. 133-34

I invite you to practice gazing through this first window -or “station”- of the Resurrection. This is what we’ll be doing:

1. To start we'll just get settled and quiet.
I'll read the scripture for this station, three times.
2. Then, we'll put up some art depicting the station and invite you to gaze on the scene for a few minutes.
3. Then I'll ask you "What's new?". I'll give you some time to see what you find as answer.
4. Then I'll ask you to write, or draw, or sketch, or list what you're getting from peering through this first window, the first Station of the Resurrection.
5. We'll go to our tables where you can share with each other what you're seeing. Folks online at home write me your thoughts at dick.thompson@calvarywestlake.org.

Ready? Let's step into the Way of Light:

1. Get yourself settled and comfortable. Maybe close your eyes...
2. Now listen to the word of God for you from Matthew's Gospel.

"After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said.'"

As I read this a second time, I invite you to see yourself there. Imagine who and what you might see, what sounds you might you hear, what might you smell or touch? What do you feel?

As I read a third time, I invite you to imagine responding to those you can see. Imagine what they are experiencing. Notice what are you experiencing.

3. Now let's pause and gaze for a few minutes on this artistic depiction with the scripture we've just heard.

First Station Art

<https://www.womeninthescrptures.com/2009/04/women-at-empty-tomb-2.html>

4. So--"*What's new?*" What do you see in this artist's rendition of that scene that adds to what you imagined when you heard the scripture read? Take a minute using your Table Guide sheet, write a word or phrase, draw a sketch, or make a list about what you noticed while gazing.
5. Go to the tables.

TABLE TALK

- a. Share your name. What was it like to engage scripture like this rather than just reading it?
- b. What did you notice when you tried to imagine yourself in the scene?
- c. What did you notice when you were gazing at the artistic rendition of the scene?
- d. Where do you/or have you in the past- see God at work in your life, bringing newness out of something that is coming to an end?
- e. Where do you see God at work in the world, bringing new life out of something that is coming to an end?

The Via Lucis Stations of the Resurrection is a way of training in the fine art of “eldering”. The more we notice evidence of the risen Christ at work in our lives, the more we will notice evidence of the risen Christ at work in the world. The more we can bear witness to His Holy Spirit presence the more we can help others notice.

In practicing the Stations of the Resurrection our hope in the face of the challenges of life in this era of the Already and the Not Yet becomes stronger.

The acronym HOPE.

Helplessness

Openness

Presence

Envision

It's like peering into the dawn of the new creation. The light grows in intensity. (Describe what It's like sometimes on a cloudless morning before the dawn...).

Final word again from a man who encountered the Risen Jesus:

“Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”

I Corinthians

15:58

Close in prayer from The Way of Light by Glen Byer, p. 13