

## Alleluia Now Knowing... (Luke 24:1-12)

When Peg McComas became unconscious and was at the hospital, everyone wondered what happened. Because the MRI and CAT Scan results didn't show the proof that she had a bleeding in her brain, but she was unconscious, the PA, doctor, neurologist tried to explain what makes sense to them medically. And they came up with the worst case scenario—non bleeding stroke, which leaves a serious damage to her body and may cause death. It made us feel like we hit a dead-end road. Medically there seemed to be no way that we will have her back to us with her health and strength. But strangely no matter what the medical staff said to us, our faith said something differently. Whenever we said a prayer, we could feel how close God is to her. We could feel she's in the Great Physician's hand. So we praised God not knowing what's going to happen to Peg. We gave thanks to God not knowing if she would come back to us healthy and well. After a couple of days she woke up and began to improve rapidly, discharged to the rehab and even there she recovered faster than anyone anticipated and went back home. There are miracles still happening in the world and we had one in our midst. When the world said to us that we are hitting a dead-end road, our faith said that in God there is always a road beyond this, bigger, wider and brighter.

The ladies who went to the tomb of Jesus must have gone through a similar experience. According to their knowledge, death was a dead end road. The tomb is the last place people go. It's a place the dead person can be buried and sealed. No other road is connected from there. And at the same time the tomb was the only place they could find comfort because they could see him one more time. At least, they could feel connected with him, and that way they could still hold on to the great time of their lives, while the Son of God was with them. So when they found that the tomb was empty and Jesus' dead body wasn't there, they didn't know what to think. They must have felt hitting a dead end road. They faced the truth that he was not there. The two men in dazzling clothes ask the ladies significant questions. "Why do you look for living among death?" "Don't you remember how he told you that the Son of Man must be crucified and rise again on the third day?" Then they remembered what he said but they still couldn't believe it. The shift from believing "death as dead-end street" to "there is a way beyond death" doesn't come easily. It takes some process. Even some disciple didn't believe it right away. Only Peter got up and

went to the tomb to see for himself. even though the invitation to leave the tomb was given to them, they didn't leave the tomb where they couldn't find Jesus anymore.

In life we also face a situation that makes us feel like reaching to a tomb and hitting a dead end road. Life and death happens in our lives all the time. There are many kinds of deaths. What used to be filled with hope at some point becomes a place filled with despair. What used to be sweet becomes tasteless or bitter. What used to be intimate becomes dry. What used to be bright becomes dark. What used to be a highway becomes a dead end road. Death of a loved one certainly makes us feel that way. Illness makes us to visit there. Changes in relationship bring us to that place. Loss of any kinds hurts and sometimes makes us stuck in that place. But the gospel makes us see things differently. It says that dead-end street has a truth to tell us. When we hit a dead end road, it's not the end. Rather it's an invitation to leave what's dead and find what's alive. It's an invitation not to stay at the tomb but to move ahead to seek what will give us life. It is rather an invitation to be open for growth.

I remember when my children reached at a certain point, and they became not sweet any more. I remember looking at them and asking, "who are you and what did you do to my sweet child?" One time we were at the mall and I put my arm around one of the boys which I used to do. But that time he shrugged his shoulder giving me a clear message that he wants my arm removed. I was shocked and little bit hurt at the same time. And I asked him why he did it, he told me it's in public. Intimacy expressed by the mother in public at that age is something embarrassing. So I put my arm down feeling rejected and confused, trying to figure out how I should respond to this situation. I felt like hitting a dead end road. Then it must have been the Holy Spirit. As I processed it little bit, I remembered how much I had trouble with my mother who didn't honor my individuality and never let go of her own image of me. That thought made me see the situation differently. It wasn't a dead end. It was rather an invitation to leave what's not there, which was being my sweet little boy, and to embrace the new reality, the growth into independent stage of his life. When my thought reached to that place, what felt like a dead end wasn't dead end any more. Rather it was a road that will take both of us to life and growth. So I bought him a necklace that day to celebrate his first rebellion. It was definitely an alleluia not knowing what's coming next.

At some point of our life, we reach to a place like a tomb, a dead end. When we cling to the former glories as if they might come back to life as long as we hold on to them, we live in a tomb. When we grasp our loved ones too tight, refusing to allow them to change, to grow to become bigger, or smarter, or stronger, we live in a tomb. When we choose to stay with what we know in our hearts to be dead, because it is safe and comfortable, we live in a tomb. The words of the messengers in the gospel story are a challenge to stop hanging on to the dead and to move unto new life. The truth that we face through this resurrection story is that Jesus is ahead of us preparing amazing things for us. And in him what seems to be dead is what's waiting for a new life. In him dead end isn't dead end any more, but is a road under construction to build a highway. In him transformation from death to life is a new reality.

This morning on Easter Sunday we hear Jesus' invitation to leave the tomb, not to be stuck in a dead end road, but move beyond it. He wants us to be open to the possibilities of new life he brings to us. He wants us to seek for an abundant life, which is his gift for us. Jesus is ahead of us to give us a life full of joy and full of blessings. Jesus is giving us a new reality, which is nothing absolutely nothing, not even death can separate us from the love of God through him. And there is always a new beginning. That's why we can boldly leave behind what is dead, empty, dark and lifeless. Today I am leaving the tomb. I am determined not to be stuck on a dead end road. I will sing alleluia not knowing what is going to happen next. I will sing alleluia not knowing how it is going to happen, but trusting Jesus' invitation to leave the tomb. What about you?

