

- **St. Mary of the Angels Easter Sunday 4/1/18**
Acts 10:34a, 37-43; I Corinthians 5:6b-8; John 20:1-9
My Brothers and Sisters,
Do you remember Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland and through the Looking Glass?

Well, it was a snowy day when young Alice, playing wearily with her kittens, climbed up on the fireplace mantle and passed through the mirror into an amazing world of kings and queens and meeting such odd characters as Tweedledum and Tweedledee and, of course, Humpty Dumpty.

Do you remember C. S. Lewis' The Chronicles of Narnia?

Well, it was a rainy day when little Lucy Pevensie, playing hide-and-go-seek, pushed her way through clothes in a wardrobe and passed through the back into the mysterious world of Narnia.

Last night at the Easter vigil, we read that it was "very early when the sun had [just] risen" that three women, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome entered the tomb where, it says, they "saw a young man sitting on the right, clothed in a white robe, and they were amazed."

Now today, we read that it was still dark when Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb and finds it empty. She runs to tell Peter and the Beloved Disciple. It is that young Beloved Disciple, who both arrives first at the tomb, and, more importantly, is the one who believes first.

Whether in the fiction of Alice through the Looking Glass and The Chronicles of Narnia or in the fact of the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead, I note three things:

- **The kind of day (snowy, rainy) or the time of day (early dawn, darkness) symbolizes the weariness of the past before the full energy of the future arrives.**
- **These are all stories with young people: Alice, the Pevensie children, the young man in the white robe, the Beloved Disciple.**
- **All must pass into or through some obstacle: a mirror, a wardrobe, an empty tomb, in order to arrive at a new and different life.**

Yes, I note these three things: weariness with the past, the creative energy of the young, a resistance that must be overcome.

As we come to Easter this year, I have to acknowledge a certain weariness: weariness in myself as I grow older, weariness with winter and the long lingering snow, weariness with politics as so many values and virtues seem to keep crumbling in our toxic

atmosphere.

But, suddenly, out of the tragic deaths of 17 students at Marjory Stoneham Douglas High in Parkland, Florida there has arisen new and young life: Emma Gonzalez, David Hogg, Cameron Kasky, Alex Wind, Jaclyn Corin, Sarah Chadwick – to name a few. Can this be a sign of resurrection for us to ponder today?

Jesus said that new wine needs new wineskins. Are these young adults the new wineskins? Has God chosen them to hold the new wine of Jesus?

Jesus also said, “Unless you become like children, you will not enter the Kingdom of God.” Are they the children showing us the way?

This is not the first time that children have led the way. Remember that almost two years before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr led his freedom march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, young children – hundreds of them -- marched into the city of Birmingham where they were imprisoned and suffered before being released. They were the ones who began the new life of freedom marching.

When Jesus appears as risen Lord, -- as we will see in the coming weeks -- He does three things: He elicits wonder, He energizes, and He unites. In these youth, whether at Birmingham or at Parkland, we stand in wonder at their conviction and courage. With these youth, do we not feel energized in the nation’s struggle against violence and prejudice? Whether they can unite us will depend much on them, but much more on God’s grace, and even more on our accompanying them by prayer and action, as little as that may be. As St. Paul reminds us this morning: “Brothers and Sisters: Do you not know that a little yeast leavens all the dough? Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a fresh batch of dough ...” Just a little fresh yeast – that’s all God asks of us!

With Easter, standing in the memory of Jesus’ resurrection and strengthened by our Eucharist, we receive this new yeast: the new yeast that will push back the powers of darkness and bring us more fully into the light of God’s love and peace.

Snowy days, rainy days, the early dawn and darkness of the past are all now being bathed in the fullness of light. Jesus once again is risen. Truly, “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.”

Kenneth J. Hughes, SJ
Brighton, Mass. 4/1/18