**Easter 2019**

As a bystander, who hoped Jesus would be the promise of the future, what hurt the most on that Friday afternoon was not the suffering emanating from Jesus’ face but the cruelty and hatred in the eyes of those who looked on. There was no joy in those eyes, not even a hint of victory, just a callous coldness. There was an absence of hope - in eyes that lacked dignity. Eyes devoid of any hint that this was an act of justice. It was as though they were no longer human, which must eventually happen to the lives of those who reject God.

*Macrina Wiederkehr OSB wrote: “There’s nothing like sorrow to get your attention. It is almost as though sorrow pulls presence out of you. In the midst of sorrow, there’s nothing to do* ***but*** *be there and somehow celebrate the hurt!”*

Yesterday, at the end of the Stations of the Cross, we placed roses on the cross. It seemed pointless at the time because Jesus was dead and had been placed into a sealed tomb. . . . . But wait!

Those flowers, still not in full bloom, spoke of a fuller life yet to come - a beauty yet to be revealed. Maybe, if we wait, if we retrieve what traces of hope remain, a new and more beautiful life will burst forth.

Those roses hope so. So, why can’t we?

After what had happened, Saturday felt like limbo without a beginning and seemingly no end. At least that appeared to be the case earlier in the day. But, we have gathered here tonight with a belief, a hope, and a longing for something new. Our hearts yearn for something that will take away the ache of loss. Something that will inspire a new hope - a hope that is contagious. Something that will inspire a new vision that changes the way we see the people around us and the world in which we live. Something that will enable us to show our true love of a creation that sings to us of God’s presence, God’s love, God’s desire for new life.

We lit a fire *earlier tonight* (last night), possibly hoping to frighten away the darkness that had seeped into our hearts. We certainly wanted a new light to shine within us. And so, our (Vigil) readings took us on a journey of hope showing us that time and again throughout history God picks us up when we have lost hope, when we have lost our way forward or experienced a terrible tragedy. No matter what, God lifts us out of our blackness into **LIFE**. So, YES, God roles away the stone that imprisons us in darkness. Rolling the stone away from this tomb was not so much to let Jesus out but to let Jesus **spring forth** into our lives and lift us up.

Jesus has (just) done that - so that now we want to shout and sing: Halleluiah! Halleluiah! Glory to God! Glory to our King.

*All too often, we bemoan our imperfections rather than embrace them as part of the process in which we are brought to God. Cherished emptiness gives God space in which to work. We are pure capacity for God. Let us not, then, take our littleness lightly. Littleness is a wonderful grace. It is a gift to receive. So, let us not become trapped in the confines of our littleness, but keep pushing forward to claim our greatness. A greatness won for us by Jesus in his death and resurrection. So remind yourself often, “****I am pure capacity for God; I can be more.****” (x2)*

O Beautiful Mystery. O Beautiful Jesus.
My life is a mystery story still unfolding
It is a good life full of joys and sorrows,
promises kept, promises broken
memories and forgetfulness.
O God of so much mystery
Continue to dwell in every layer of my life! (M.W.)

Jesus died the way he did and rose again,

in order to fill your lives more and more each day with his Spirit.

Halleluiah! Halleluiah! Christ is risen! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!

**Happy Easter! Today, tomorrow, and for ever!**