

## Homily for Easter Day

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Being forgetful is something that's rather common to all of us. It's especially true of those who have that kind of forgetful personality: those annoying people who're always losing their keys or leaving behind their jackets or forgetting dinner engagements or not changing their clocks for daylight saving. And, even if we're not like that, which of us hasn't forgotten the odd umbrella?

The kind of forgetfulness Luke's Gospel is talking about this morning is something rather different. It's not connected to personality types or vagueness or being stressed or overworked. It's forgetfulness as a spiritual problem. In terms of the seven deadly sins, it's probably closest to the sin of *sloth*, which has nothing to do with laziness. Sloth arises from a sense of resignation or indifference. It comes from the conviction, deep down, that things can't change, that the world will always be this way, and that there's nothing I can do to make a difference.

And that's what forgetfulness is about. It's the condition, quite simply, of forgetting about God. It's when we look at our lives, at the world around us, and feel only despair; we leave out the most important factor in the equation: the creative and re-creative presence of God.

That's what the apostles are like in today's reading from the Gospel of Luke. Since the crucifixion, they've become forgetful. They're sitting at home, miserable and overcome with grief. Convinced that Jesus's death is the end of everything. They've completely forgotten anything Jesus has said to them. They've forgotten all the promises and the words of comfort and assurance. In other words, fundamentally they've forgotten what God is like. Their experience of grief and disappointment and hopelessness has outweighed everything else, and blotted any other words but words of loss and despair. They think that death has had the last word. They're trapped in their own forgetfulness.

In contrast to the apostles, the women disciples who visit the tomb are different. Yes, at first they too are forgetful. But confronted with the empty tomb and the angels and the message that Christ is risen, they begin to remember. And they run back joyfully to tell the apostles. But, with the exception of Peter, the apostles are too caught up in their own despair to remember, even when they're reminded.

The gospel today, then, on this Easter morning, is a call to remembrance. The resurrection is God's wake-up call, the dynamic reminder of God's presence even in our darkest hour. Archbishop Rowan Williams describes the resurrection as 'the second big bang', an event as great and as

explosive as at the very beginning. The resurrection is God's re-creation of the world. It's a potent reminder to us that God is utterly faithful to his creation, from beginning to end. God will have the last word, just as God spoke the very first word. The same power as in the creation of the world is again at play in the raising of Jesus from the dead: the same burst of energy and light, the same abundant pouring forth of fecundity and life—life out of nothing, life from the dead. And so this morning the gospel summons us to a life of remembrance. We're called to remember who this God is, the one who has created the world, who has lovingly formed each one of us, and who will not abandon us.

The God we remember today is the God who is faithful to that creation, whose faithfulness is symbolised above all in raising of God's Son to life—Jesus Christ, our risen Lord, the hope of *our* resurrection, the overcoming of death for us and for the whole creation. We're called to remember this Easter God, the one who brings life out of darkness, joy out of pain, hope out of despair. The Easter God is the one who, in Christ, shows us that God has the last word: on your life and mine.

And that's what our eucharist is about: it's about remembering (*anamnesis*, to use the technical term); it's about letting that remembrance, that anamnesis, permeate our whole being, body and soul.

Not death, then, not despair, not grief, not loss. These may be real and painful but they are not final. The last word on our lives, on our world, is God's word—God's Word who is Jesus Christ: a word of life and love beyond any power of death, a word worth remembering every day of our lives.

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