

HOLY SATURDAY, 1981

Homily - Rev. Charles A. Kelly  
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for The Richmond News Leader

EASTER: The Call to Trust in the Renewing Power of Love.

Tonight we are called to Vigil. We are called to let surface the deepest hungers of our hearts: The hunger for meaning, the hunger for love, the hunger for reconciliation and peace.

Tonight we are called to fire up our expectancy that a New Day is about to dawn.

But this call to Vigil is a call to struggle. For our hopes and dreams are too often assaulted, too easily dashed.

We approach our Vigil tonight as a people whose very ability to dream, to hope, to expect a New Day is itself in need of renewal and healing. We are, all of us, wounded by the violence of the dark, by the almost constant assaults on the dignity of human life. We succumb to the numbness, the cynicism, the fear, and the isolating defensiveness that blind us to the very possibility of a new dawn, a new way. We are much more prone to believe bad news than good! To enter Vigil is to struggle to believe in the dawning Power of God, in whom Power and Love are one.

The vigilants are the hearers of the Good News this dawn: Jesus is Risen! This proclamation bears the power of our God to reach to the very depths of human brokenness, the deepest pits of human experience, to the sting of death itself, and do something new!

He is risen! The Son rises! Love is victorious! And a new freedom dawns. Freedom from fear, from destructive defensiveness, from cynicism and despair. Freedom to hope, to trust, to love and be loved. Freedom even to die, as Jesus died, as a final and total act of trust in this God who constantly wants to make us new.

Resurrection Faith is not blind faith. The signs of God's renewing power surround all who will open their eyes this dawn. Neither does Easter Hope call us to ~~blind~~ to the brokenness, the ~~violence~~ violence, the hatred, the injustice in our midst. The call of this Easter morning redeems us from the dual unrealities of naive optimism and consuming despair. We are called to believe that the Power of Love is victorious in Jesus Christ, who was crucified. We are called to experience the power flowing from His Resurrection. We are called to find a new Peace, a new meaning, a new courage, and a renewed love precisely in the midst of our struggle. We are called, in the Power of the Risen Christ, to renew the face of the Earth!

With Peter, we cry out today:

"Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave us new birth; a birth unto hope which draws its life from the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead". (1 Peter 1:3)