

The snow we had this past Monday made for quite the story. It seldom snows that intensely in March, so several stories emerged depending on what we saw. For some it was a sloppy mess that made for tougher work conditions. For others it was playtime and great snowballs. For my son Shaen it meant singing “I’m Dreaming of a White Easter,” and for others still it was pure beauty. The same snowfall—yet different stories were told depending on what we saw.

Twentieth century Jewish philosopher Martin Buber told this story. “My grandfather was lame. Once they asked him to tell a story about his teacher. And he related how his teacher used to hop and dance while he prayed. My grandfather rose as he spoke, and he was so swept away by his story that he began to hop and dance to show how the master had done it. From that hour he was cured of his lameness. That’s how to tell a story.” (Chittister, *In the Light of the Messengers*, p. 63)

These 2 examples speak to the importance of living the story we see. The *Easter* story we heard today has been unfolding for 2,000 years, and the story at its core—the story of God’s life and love—has been unfolding since the beginning. The 3 characters in the gospel got inside this empty-tomb Jesus story and eventually came to live what they saw: that Jesus’ death was not the final word—Life was! Yet, if we *only* celebrate the Easter story as a faith event in history, we’ll miss its deeper meaning. Jesus invites us now in 2013 to get inside his story of dyings and risings, of life and love. So let’s imagine ourselves jumping into the Easter story of life today and see some ways we live this story. Here are a few examples.

When an intensive care nurse works intensely to stabilize a patient and take care of their critical needs, she and the patient experience struggle and hard times. When the patient improves and is discharged to another unit, they both feel joy and share a piece of resurrection.

Some years ago a friend was unjustly accused of a crime. Our entire neighborhood community felt their pain deeply and supported them throughout their ordeal. When their name was cleared, we rejoiced and celebrated with them. Truly a resurrection moment.

In my growing up years and into early adulthood, some work was not open to women, and some fields were dominated by women almost to the exclusion of men. We stand on the shoulders of people who paved the way for us, and it hasn't been easy. Yet over the last 30 years, so many opportunities have opened up to both women and men. It makes me smile to see our children benefitting from greater equality—definitely a rising to new life.

Can we see in these situations of improved health, vindication, and equal opportunity the Easter story we are living?

Recently I met with an engaged couple of the Jewish and Islamic faiths as they shared their struggles and joys. In the midst of pressures they feel because of their different religious traditions, they have found common ground—love at the core. I felt so moved when they shared how deeply they respect each other and respect how their faith traditions have helped shape them into the fine people they are today. They are living their love story, and new life is emerging.

Those who are in recovery live resurrection stories. About 10 years ago the nearby Springfield community lost 2 high school students to drug and alcohol overdoses within 2 months of each other. To say that we were in the tomb of grief was an understatement. In the midst of these devastating losses, a member of our youth ministry team agreed to tell our high school teens his story of recovery from addiction to alcohol and drugs. His honest sharing and answering of the teens' heartfelt and hard questions gave these young people hope. Scott embodied resurrection as he told his story.

Can we see in these moments of common ground and honest sharing the Easter story we are living?

And of course there are times when we don't have to endure the behind-the-scenes struggle, but instead bask only in the moment of rising. Getting an exciting phone call announcing a baby's arrival. Watching a dog catch a frisbee. Seeing kids happily devour a delicious Dairy Queen treat. Sharing the joy of a friend who just landed the job they had hoped for. These resurrection moments are easy to take.

Finally, I'd like to share a story about the NCAA basketball tournament. Although the La Salle men's team's lost this past Thursday, I'd like to talk about their sweet ride into the Sweet Sixteen. Their strong work ethic, great teamwork, and excellent coaching laid the foundation for their rise to prominence. This time of celebration and winning could only happen because they were willing to put in countless hours of practice and preparation—hard work preceded these resurrection moments! Although the game moments were exciting, I'd like to share a life moment from one of the players that I believe is the heart of the Easter story. Sophomore Jerrell Wright had written a religion paper last year, and part of that paper was printed in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Jerrell wrote: "I believe in love. I believe in hard work. I believe when things don't go right, I'm moving ahead." (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Section C, p. 1, "Wright Inspires Coach," Wednesday, March 27, 2013) These words sum up the empty-tomb story of Jesus. We have been made to love. We will struggle and hurt at times, but we won't stay there forever. We will always move into resurrection. This is the essence of the Christian faith—that we all have the God-given tools to live the resurrection story.

Each of us has a story to tell, and we each tell it in a unique way—through words, music, pictures, sports, food, craftsmanship, or whatever fits us. It's critical that we tell our story—both

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the cross and resurrection moments—because the telling of it is woven together with the rising to new life. My Easter message to each of you is to tell your story so that through that telling you may reach fulfillment. Let's tell our story by living it and believing that God is raising us up in every moment.

So jump into this Easter story of Love and take it on as your own. Live Your Story of Life.

*Scripture Readings—Easter Sunday*

Acts 10: 34a, 37-43

1 Corinthians 5: 6b-8

John 20: 1-9