

Good News Brightens Ordinary Time

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By Lucia A. Silecchia

I recently read reports about a study positing that the American news media has been biased toward reporting bad or negative news in its coverage of the covid pandemic. Certainly, there was, and is, bad news to be reported. Yet, what saddened me was the report's assertion that negative articles are the ones most sought out by the public as reports of bad news garnered more clicks and public attention than those that reported on progress or hopeful developments. Could it be that we seek out bad news more than the good?

I hope not.

As we enter our celebrations of Easter joy, this is our season of Good News. The celebrations of Holy Week and Easter show nothing more clearly than the triumph of the Good News over the sorrowful, sinful and sad. As I look over the accounts of these sacred days, good news unfolds in unlikely places.

As Holy Week began, a much-mocked woman poured expensive oil over Christ to anoint Him in an exuberant display of her love and devotion. Two millennia later, her kindness is retold. Fearless, generous love like this is good news.

At the Last Supper, Christ washed the feet of His closest disciples – and met with their confusion and objections. When God stoops to serve in this most humble of ways, He gave us the best example of how to serve each other. That is good news.

In a more particular way, at that same gathering, the special life of service in the priesthood was instituted. This has been, and remains, a sacred gift for generations to follow. That is good news too.

At that Last Supper, Christ also said for the first time, *"This is my body."* *"This is my blood."* With those now-familiar words, Christ established the Eucharist -- the nourishment to sustain all of us who were not with Him during His brief years on earth. The gift of His real and true presence is, really and truly, good news.

In the agonizing hours in Gethsemane, Christ prayed *"Not what I will but what you will."* This example of trusting obedience reverberates through the millennia as the most courageous prayer I know. Although uttered in the depth of sorrow, the love for God and for all of us that is embedded in this prayer is achingly good news.

When St. Peter heard the cock crow after his third denial of Christ, “*he broke down and wept.*” To be capable of feeling such deep sorrow, having the grace to weep, and ultimately knowing the forgiveness of a loving God is also good news.

At the foot of the Cross, Christ’s faithful mother remained with St. John. To them, Christ said “*Behold your son*” and “*Behold your mother.*” In that gesture, Christ shared His mother not only with John but with all of us. Being entrusted to the care of a loving mother is good news.

A Roman centurion, caught up in the most ignoble of executions, declared in awe at Christ’s death “[T]ruly this man was the Son of God.” For reasons I can’t quite explain, that exclamation touches my heart every time I read it. When the most unlikely of people recognizes the glory of God in the darkest of hours, that is good news.

Joseph of Arimathea was, by scriptural accounts, wealthy and highly ranked. He donated a grave in which to bury Christ with dignity and care. When someone of rank and privilege does a kindness for one who has suffered so much, that is good news.

And, in the early hours of a remarkable Sunday, the best of all good news came. In the Great Vigil of Easter, light bursts through the darkness with the glorious simplicity of the Gospel words, “*He has been raised. He is not here.*”

“*He is not here.*” He is not here in the darkness of a tomb, in the agony of Gethsemane, in the corrupt court of Pilate, in the midst of a jeering crowd, in the embrace of a betrayer, on the path to Golgotha, or in the last hours of a brutal execution.

“*He has been raised.*” That is the Good News! That is the Good News that dispels the darkness. This was not merely the Good News to brighten a Sunday morning two thousand years ago. This Good News dispels the darkness for all eternity. Even in a world that still knows all too much of the sorrowful, sinful and sad, this Good News can also brighten our ordinary times.

May God bless you and yours with a joyous Eastertide!

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