

Easter Vigil 2010

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. All the King's horses and all the King's men, couldn't put humpty together again.

Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water. Jack fell down and broke his crown and Jill came tumbling after.

Mary, Mary quite contrary how does your Garden grow? With silver bells and cockle shells and pretty maids all in a row.

Yes, I know this is really sad that after 22 Easter Vigils here at St Ignatius my preaching is reduced to nursery rhymes. What can I say that I have not said about the great themes of new life in Christ? Why not nursery rhymes? Some would say that the Easter event: the raising of Jesus from the dead makes about as much sense as a nursery rhyme. You really believe that the Crucified One is now the Risen One, that God has intervened in man and nature's way of decomposition, disintegration, disillusion and created something new for now and forever? Get real! There is no rhyme nor reason for believing those who have said "we have seen the lord". There is no rhyme or reason to believe that Christ has conquered death when we see its continued power in war, in terrorist acts, in earthquakes and other natural disaster and in the course of illness and disease.

So are we reduced to rhymes with no reason? Actually if you know anything about nursery rhymes, you know they say there is a "hidden" agenda. They seem like nonsense but really they mean much more. If you look closer, you find their meaning. They refer to someone or something real. They are more than nonsense. These rhymes have their reason.

And for us tonight, this Easter night we may find that these rhymes have something to do with Easter after all!

You know how Humpty Dumpty is pictured. An egg! That primordial symbol of life, the egg which will become something new, something breaking open to become more than it was. But here in the rhyme it is broken, disintegrated in a way that can not be put back together again. (if you think there are any allusions to present church situations, that's your own imagination)

And if Jack and Jill came up the church steps to fetch a pail of baptismal water yesterday they would have found an empty font, an empty well, the

source of new life, drained and dry as so many who came yesterday to remember the draining of life from Jesus of Nazareth on the cross only to find that there was more to dry than meets the eye.

And Mary, Mary , how does your garden grow? Look around you. Look at this garden growing? Springing forth with beauty! Have we returned to Eden, Eric? Have we found ourselves in the first Garden.

Rhymes with Reasons! Three Easter themes

Disintegration! Garden of Eden! The Well and Font of new life!

Everything in the lives of those first disciples is disintegrating. Can you imagine the disillusionment that they must have felt seeing their friend, their hope, their light, their dream for God's kingdom now decomposing in a tomb, hidden behind the stone, cut off from all human contact now and forever. And they can do nothing. They can only stand speechless and helpless before the power of Death and before the powers of Empire that are victors once again... as they have continued to be into our day. No, the first disciples could not put Jesus back together again. They could not just pick up the pieces of their lives and go on. No, but God could! God who created order and beauty from Chaos in the first story of creation was now reordering, recreating, doing something that only God could do. God was doing so much more than restoring, God was re-storying. A whole new world, a whole new creation was coming into being with the Resurrection of Jesus.

And that is why, we tonight find ourselves in the new Garden of Eden. As Bishop NT Wright says in the Challenge of Easter "The spirit who brooded over the water of creation at the beginning broods now over God's world, ready to bring it bursting to springtime life. Mary, Mary quite contrary goes to the tomb while it is still dark and in the morning light meets Jesus in the garden. She thinks he is the gardener, as in one important sense he is. This is the new creation. This is the new Genesis. We are here in the Garden where there is no death, no weeping and mourning, no injustice. Here in this place new life is bursting forth from the hidden places beneath the earth. "see I am doing something new, Behold it springs forth!"

And lets not forget that pail of water. This baptismal water is flowing once again. What we saw yesterday, a dry and drained font, empty of life, empty of its promise of new creation, is now flowing. Death is now beyond the pale with this water of life flowing from the side of the new temple who is Christ.

Ian and Mike, it's all downhill from here. Like Peter and the beloved disciple who raced each other to the tomb, only to find the wrappings of the Crucified One now the Risen One, you are racing not each other but you are racing with your old selves and dare I say, erasing your old selves who have been crucified with Him so that you may Rise with him.

Not bad for some old nursery rhymes! For there is no rhyme or reason to this holy night, except a Love beyond all telling, a Story Teller who refashions the old and re-stories us. Alleluia! What Rhymes with that?