

Sermon 2007 The Resurrection of Our Lord
Text: Luke 24:1-12
Theme: "Resurrection! It's Not Just for Easter!"

Mary Ann Wisnesky loved roses more than any other flower. She liked all flowers but roses were special to her. They were beautiful and dangerous and delicate, very unlike the way Mary Ann saw herself. She lived a rather ordinary life. She worked at the library and had for nearly twenty years; leaving each morning at 8:00, eating a lunch of egg salad on crackers in the break room, and returning home each evening at promptly 5:30. It was the only life she had known since graduating from high school.

Mary Ann lived in a small one room apartment over the flower shop just a few blocks from the library. All week long, Mary Ann looked forward to Friday because on Friday she splurged! She would stop on the way home at Antonio's for take out pizza and she would purchase a rose from the flower shop for her table. The owner of the flower shop, who was also her landlord, sold the roses for half price after 5:00 on Friday in preparation for the arrival of fresh roses on Saturday.

Sometimes, when she was feeling particularly reckless, she would even purchase two roses!

On one particular Friday, Mary Ann came into the flower shop only to discover that all of the roses were gone. She was very disappointed. Maybe it seems like a small thing to you, but roses were Mary Ann's favorite flower and that rose on Friday was something to which she looked forward all week. The thought of that beautiful, sweet rose got her through all the ordinariness of her daily life. She trudged up the stairs to her room, feeling hot tears rolling down her cheeks and feeling very silly for crying but unable to stop. It seemed like all the sadness of life was crushing down on top of her.

She opened the door to her room and beauty flooded out upon her. ROSES! Not just one. Not just two. But dozens. All colors, all types. Vases full of roses on her table, on her night stand in her bathroom, rose petals strewn upon the floor. Her tears of sorrow turned to tears of joy as she turned to see the flower shop owner standing behind her smiling from ear to ear.

That is grace. A phenomenal gift that is neither deserved nor expected. Like Mary Ann walking into a room flowing with roses, so we walk into this sanctuary this morning. That which was stripped bare on Friday when our Lord was laid in the tomb is overflowing with radiance and adornment this morning. We left here Friday, trudging through our daily lives and feeling the weight of the sin which Jesus bore on the cross. We come here today feeling light and filled with joy. Stop and smell the flowers. That is the scent of Easter. That is the aroma of Grace. That is the power of the Resurrection from the Dead!

But Resurrection is not just for Easter. We don't have to trudge through the year waiting for the Resurrection like Mary Ann trudged through the week waiting for Friday. Resurrection is ours day by day, even moment by moment. Resurrection is what God does in our lives when through Word and Sacrament he forgives our sins and frees us from the power of Satan. Resurrection is the continuous, supernatural activity of the creator in our otherwise dying lives. Resurrection is God blooming all around us.

I back out of my driveway and come to church every day on automatic pilot, coffee in hand, talk radio playing. Suddenly last week I wondered what those neighbors down the street had in their tree. FLOWERS! The tree is flowering. Resurrection! From the death of winter comes the birth of spring, suddenly, without warning.

Our souls are not unlike that tree. We are daily weighed down by sin, by the struggle of being Christian, by a thousand shoulds and oughts. We struggle to do what is right but we wonder, we doubt that we are good enough, holy enough. But we think too small. Our Father comes to us and says, "Why are you wondering? Everything I have is yours. You are my beloved children and you are forgiven of every offense. Of course you are good enough. You are mine! The feast is ready. Come to the feast!"

Resurrection. Sometimes we almost miss it because we were stumbling through life looking at the ground when everything is coming into bloom all around us. Sometimes we almost miss it even as it blooms in our own lives because we so

quickly forget that we are the crown of creation, the sons and daughters of the King. Don't miss it. Your life is full of roses. Your life is full of resurrection. And God has yet even more to give to you. AMEN.