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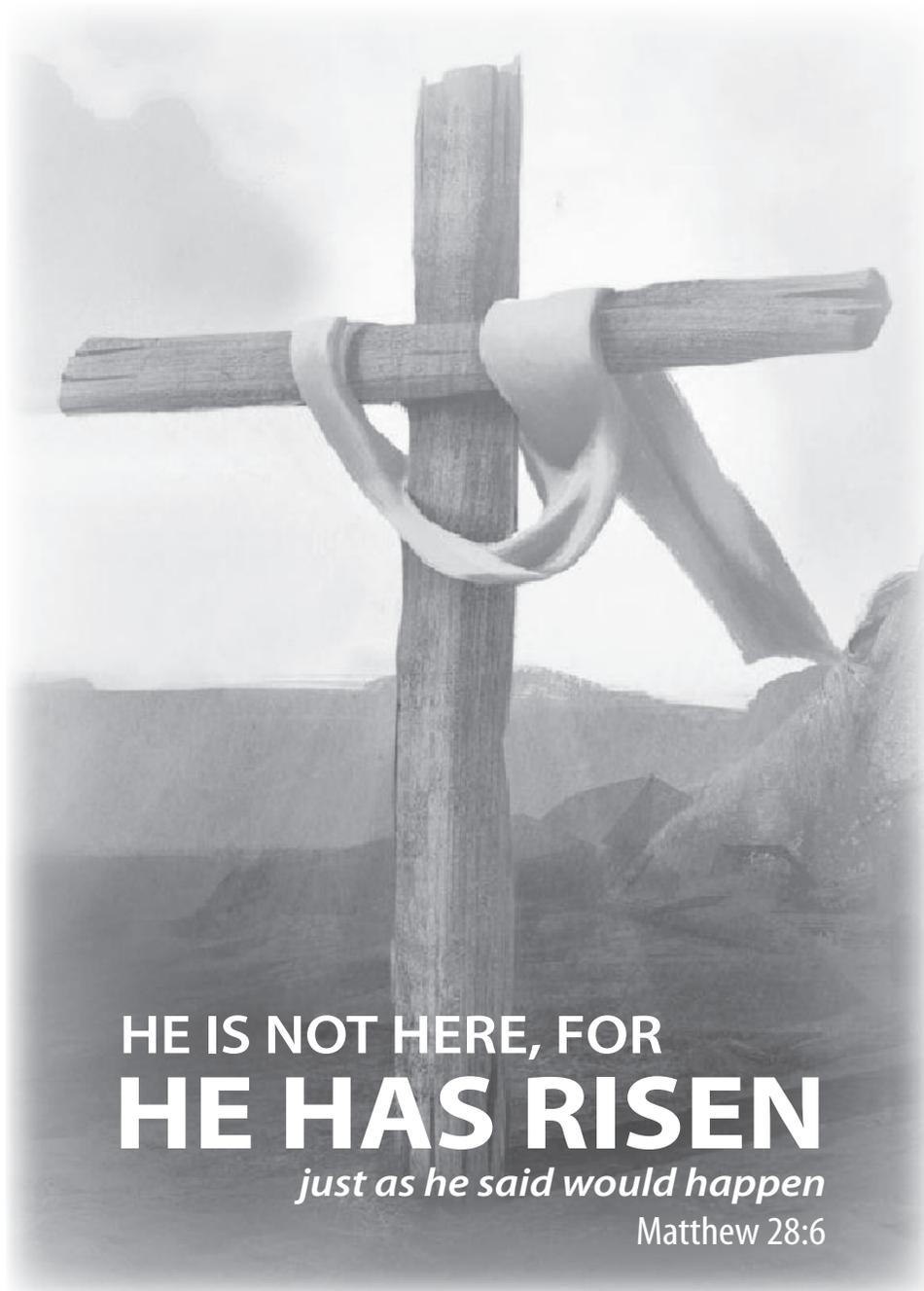
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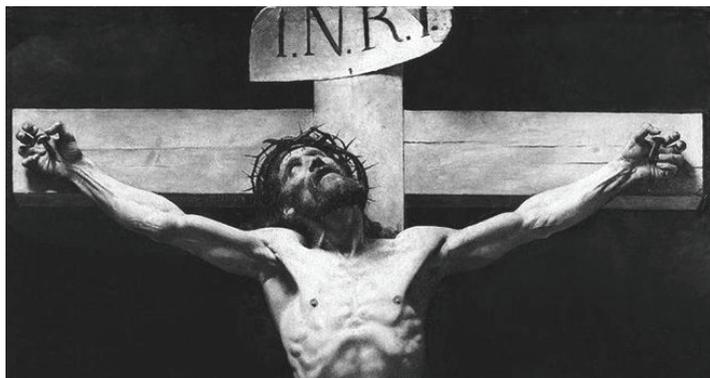


HE IS NOT HERE, FOR
HE HAS RISEN

just as he said would happen

Matthew 28:6

PLEASE NOTE: THERE WILL BE NO WEEKDAY MASSES FOLLOWING EASTER SUNDAY IN ORDER FOR FATHER CHARLES TO REST UP FOR THE FIRST COMMUNIONS AND REGULAR EASTER SEASON MASSES.



STANDING AT THE CROSSROADS OF THE CROSS

Crossroads, a blues classic performed by Eric Clapton, is a song about a man seeking escape from his desperate existence. Will he find it in a motorcycle ride, a drinking binge, a flight from one destination to the next, or in God's grace? At the song's end, we are left to wonder. Nevertheless, the lyrics, laced with Clapton's riveting guitar riffs, grab our attention.

I went down to the crossroads, fell down on my knees.

Asked the lord above for mercy, "Save me if you please."

A crossroads is a place where divergent paths meet, forcing us to make choices which can be at once exciting and scary. It can be a place of crisis, where the pain of the past butts up against hopes for the future; or a place of opportunity, where the road ahead promises brighter prospects in the vast frontier beyond.

In either case, a crossroads is a call to change: from where we've been to where we're going; from what we're leaving behind to what we're striving for; from whom we are to who we're becoming.

As free-willed creatures, we are continually leaving one crossroads and entering another. Will we pick up the ball or the doll? Will we eat our food or play with it? Will we wear blue socks or black socks? Will we finish high school or work as a mechanic? Will we propose to Susan or play the field? And on it goes.

Like a string of beads on a necklace, crossroads connect the past, present, and future of human experience in an unbroken thread of possibility. But the central crossroads, the one through which every life must pass, lies on a hill in Golgotha.

Standing in Paralysis

"I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture." That was the self-description of a first century carpenter who not only professed equality with God, but insisted that he and God were one and the same.

Was this the babbling of a megalomaniac, simpleton, or quack? If so, we are confronted by the incongruity of such characterizations with a life and moral philosophy held in universal esteem, even among his critics. Thus, we are left to dismiss him as a befuddled or dangerous individual, or worse... take him at his word.

We stand at this crossroads paralyzed, completely undone by the staggering implications of God's physical visitation. Can we move forward? Will we?

Splitting the Horizontal and Vertical

The God of the Bible is intrinsically complete in the eternal community of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus, creation is a work not of God's loneliness or lack, but of his love. Love binds, love makes perfect, love completes. Love bridges the chasm of isolation bringing fellowship where there is separation, making true community a reality. And the wider the chasm, the greater measure of love needed to bring distant parties together.

Between God and man, the chasm is unfathomable—in fact, it's unbridgeable. Without divine intervention, communion with God is impossible. Yet between that divide stands the Cross. Jesus Christ, through his life, death, and resurrection reaches over the infinite expanse in an unequalled act of love.

Along the Vertical

In everything, the Cross is central. As the vertical penetration of God into spacetime, the Cross allows God to present himself to man and man to present himself to God.

At the head of the Cross, God's love flows earthward from a thorn-gashed brow. At the foot of the Cross, man's gaze moves heavenward to a pair of nail-pierced feet. In divine descent, the Son atones, the Father forgives, and the Spirit indwells. In response, man reaches up to receive and, then, marvels at the wonder of the divine gift. In this divine-human interchange, the Cross brings together the earthly and the heavenly, uniting what was separate and imparting life to what was life-less.

Across the Horizontal

Across the horizontal, the Cross links all that has gone before with all that is yet to come. Standing at the interface of eternity past and eternity future, the Cross is the junction of both *historical* time and *historic* time. Although these two expressions of time appear synonymous, they reflect the differing aspects used in the New Testament: *chronos* and *kairos*.

Time as a quantity is *chronos*: a linear measurement of historical change. It's from *chronos* we get the term, *chronological* time: the continuous thread of time sewing the past, present and future into a seamless fabric.

Kairos time is qualitative of a moment or event metaphysically pregnant with meaning and importance. It is the time spoken of when Paul writes to the Galatian church, "But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons." *Kairos* brings together the types, "shadows," and prophesies of the scriptures with their fulfillments in the spacetime continuum in which, the Cross is central.

In *chronos*, the Cross splits historical time into BC and AD. In *kairos*, the Cross stands between the epochal phenomena of the Creation and the New Creation, the Fall and Redemption, Israel and the Church, the Old Covenant and the New, law and grace, and the pre-incarnate Word and the Word made flesh. In *Kairos*, the eternal transcends and fulfills the temporal.

Where they Meet

Where the upright timber and crossbeam meet is a crown of thorns adorning him whose utterance, "It is finished," announced to the universe the unimaginable: Everlasting communion with God is possible! At that momentous juncture, a pair of hands fastened to a rough hewn log reaches out to a broken and hurting world.

In a posture of divine openness, God invites us to move out from the crossroads toward the Cross and be taken up in his embrace.

From the Crossroads to the Cross

It is at the crossroads of Golgotha we face our true condition: one so desperate, it is beyond our ability to fix. As German astronomer, Johann Hieronymus Schroeder, once wrote, "It has been the cross which has revealed to good men that their goodness has not been good enough." And that can be a hard message indeed.

For those who don't believe in God, feelings of guilt and remorse are not the result of violating some divine code of morality, but are hang-ups to be overcome.

For others, God is a cosmic scorekeeper who keeps track of performance to determine our merit and worth. If the good done in this world outweighs the bad, then heaven awaits. If not, our destiny is either a purifying process of re-cycling or final removal. But since those who accept the divine call, God is the Savior who extends the gift of eternal life to all who receive him. Like the *Crossroads* protagonist, they have come to the crossroads of eternity acknowledging both their need and debt. But unlike him, they move from the crossroads to the Cross.

Instead of the restless uncertainty haunting the hero of *Crossroads*, these sojourners have the settled confidence spoken of by the apostle John: "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

Such is the centrality of the Cross.

(from *Crisis Magazine* March 28, 2018 by Regis Nicoll)



THE GREATEST EASTER PAINTING EVER MADE

Tucked away in a central Parisian museum that was once a railway station, there hangs an Easter painting quite unlike any Gospel masterpiece created before or after it. It is not painted by a Rembrandt or a Rubens or the patron saint of artists, Fra Angelico. The painting is the work of a little-known Swiss painter. For those who make a trip to see it, viewing the canvas is a special spiritual experience in their lives.

The work does not even show the risen Jesus. It merely portrays two witnesses, Jesus' oldest and youngest apostle. The youngest who was the only man brave enough to stay by Jesus' cross and the only one who did not die a martyr's death as a result of it. The oldest apostle who first denied Jesus in fear, yet ultimately chose to be crucified upside down by the Roman authorities rather than deny Christ's resurrection.

In "The Disciples Peter and John Running to the Sepulchre on the Morning of the Resurrection" by Eugène Burnand, John

clasps his hand in prayer while Peter holds his hand over his heart. The viewer feels the rush as their hair and cloaks fly back with the wind. They are sprinting towards discovery of the moment that forever altered heaven and earth. As you look at it, engage for a moment in what the Catholic blogger Bill Donaghy calls "the visual equivalent of *Lectio Divina*." As Donaghy notes, "This Resurrection scene does not put us before still figures near a stagnant stone, or figures standing with stony faces in a contrived, plastic posture, pointing to an empty tomb. This scene is dynamic; we are in motion."

During his time, Burnand was fascinated by the possibilities of the emerging art of photography. Ironically, he would later be dismissed in the twentieth century as too "bourgeois" and anti-modernist when in fact he was merging his love of tradition with his interest in new technological ways of capturing the human person. His painting feels cinematic long before cinema existed as a major art form.

Through the movement and immediacy of the scene, the preceding minutes with Mary Magdalene are palpable. In a sense, she is in the painting too. "You can almost hear her voice in the background, can you not, a few minutes earlier, as she burst into their house..." writes the Episcopal Bishop Dorsey McConnell in an Easter sermon meditating on the painting.

Apart from Jesus' mother, no other three participants capture the closeness of Jesus' encounter with humankind quite like John, Peter and Mary of Magdala. Their interactions with Christ embody a relationship to God previously unimaginable to mankind. Jesus turning to Peter as they sit by the fire and asking three times, "Do you love me?", thereby washing away the sin of the three denials past; Christ turning to John in the midst of his suffering and saying, "Behold, your mother," giving her to the Church entire. And, of course, the beautiful moment about to transpire in which Jesus' merely says Mary's name and she recognizes Him with a cry of "Rabbouni!" They are the moments which cause one to wonder how those who truly hate Christianity (not merely disbelief it) can remain so hostile to its narrative beauty.

Burnand's work was part of a late nineteenth century version of the new evangelization. The public, particularly in the United States, desired original religious imagery. Burnand lived in an era in which a revived spiritual hunger fought against the push of emerging atheistic philosophies, philosophies that would eventually consume a continent and leave only a struggling remnant of European Christendom in its wake.

He was "an illustrator of popular working types: collectors of coal, sowers in the field and even penitent woodsmen praying at a roadside cross," writes Gabriel P. Weisberg, a professor of art history at the University of Minnesota. For him the image of two fishermen racing toward a supernatural realization about the death of a carpenter would be instinctive.

Look into Peter's wide open eyes and John's intense gaze. Their eyes contain a mix of anxiousness and hope, the way a parent or grandparent's eyes look at the news of an impending birth. A new life is about to emerge, but there is still uncertainty because it is a mystery beyond full human comprehension or control. Peter and John's faces capture the same sense of anticipation.

Burnand created a sparse, simple painting capturing two of the most important players in the greatest story ever told. Meditate upon their faces as Burnand intended you to do and through them discover the empty tomb.

(from *Crisis Magazine* April 18, 2014 by Elise Ehrhard)



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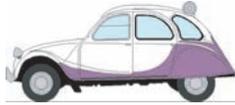
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