

## Tomorrow is Today -- Easter2B

In case you didn't read your *Pebble* this week, the snippet at the top of the front page is from a talk by Martin Luther King: "We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late. Procrastination is still the thief of time.... We may cry out desperately for time to pause in her passage, but time is deaf to every plea and rushes on. Over the bleached bones and jumbled residue of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words: "Too late." There is an invisible book of life that faithfully records our vigilance or our neglect. ...We still have a choice today: nonviolent coexistence or violent co-annihilation. We must move past indecision to action.... Now let us begin. Now let us rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter—but beautiful—struggle for a new world." Such language – not scripture, but it sounds holy -- and such good news; we have a purpose!

Dr King's talk, at The Riverside Church was entitled "Beyond VietNam." It was the climax of a public rally against the war, that took place on April the Fourth, 1967 and it became one of his most admired speeches. The choice, says King is between "nonviolent coexistence," the rule of law in peace and civility, and the sharing of resources – what a couple of weeks ago we talked about as a hard new world to make – and the alternative: "violent co-annihilation," a condition reported and recorded in our newspapers every single day.

The true rule of law is not of course based on whatever it takes to control a diverse population but on our most forthright efforts to be just. As a great man said, “Good government is conservative with money and liberal with people.” For example, as we are now all too slowly coming to admit, our criminal justice system is good neither with money nor with people. Nor is it much good at reducing crime. Thus it is not a true rule of law. It is the result of poor – tragic -- choices.

Now, sharing of resources is something we can boast a little about. This week a marvelous drama was played here at St. Peter’s by the Sea, as thousands of objects changed hands at the Yard Sale and their new owners endowed many hundreds of future meals for hungry people, all without the use of price tags. Thanks be to God for this adventure in community cooperation. Thanks be to Nancy Castle and her merry band, for making it happen. They have good stories to tell. Ask ‘em!

Rule of law and sharing of resources: nonviolent coexistence, versus “violent co-annihilation,” not only in our own wildly overarmed and security-crazed society, but through the horrors of violent crime, terrorism, oppression, occupation, mass murder and war.

As King points out, we have a choice. Sometimes it’s hard to believe we do. But our human existence hinges most radically on this one reality: we have a choice. ‘God so loved the world that she gave her only daughters the power of choice, that whosoever tried their best to make good ones would not perish – though they die.’ “We must move past

indecision into action,” King says, actions, as in those things that speak louder and originate deeper than words. Yes sometimes our decision to choose well is the only action we can take in the face of overpowering violence and/or abusive economic power. And sadly, sometimes we even have to be violent in order to halt violence done by others. There is no need for nor point to martyrdom in a just society.

But God’s most holy gift to us in Jesus the Christ, as John says in his letter, that which “was from the beginning, we have heard, have seen with our eyes, and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life, was revealed to us so that our joy may be complete. This is the message we have received and proclaim: that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all, and whoever obeys his word, truly in this person the love of God has reached perfection.

How can such great things happen in the likes of us, just by way of our coming to choose ways of peace? Thomas Merton waxes mystical: “A door opens in the center of our being and we seem to fall through it into immense depths which, although they are infinite, are all accessible to us. God touches us with a touch that is emptiness and empties us. God moves us with a simplicity that simplifies us.”

The simplicity is evident in the acts of love and life that people instinctively perform when they have given themselves up to lives of faith. Last Tuesday, a friend from high school, Rennie died from raging cancers after years of diagnoses, treatments, remissions and hoping. The untimeliness of her passing is tragic and terribly sad for her loved ones, for everybody who knew her. But the

choices she and her family made over the past few years: to spend festive times together, to raise money and awareness in cancer walks and networking, to nourish and cherish brave hope and rigorous healing strategies, to love each other as selflessly as they could in the face of agonizing uncertainty, these faithful choices made of their family a community of love that inspired everybody who knows them to value life and love more highly.

The process of choosing can be, must be at once mystical and practical, uncertain and yet concrete, humbling and joyous: “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.”

Here is Richard Tarnas, who describes our choices: “I believe our task is to develop a moral and aesthetic imagination deep enough and wide enough to encompass the contradictions of our time and history: the tremendous loss and tragedy as well as greatness and nobility, an imagination capable of recognizing that where there is light there is shadow, that out of hubris and fall can come moral regeneration, out of suffering and death, resurrection and rebirth.”

Imagine that. Choose it.