



Spiritual Care Notes: April 2019

Here's a joke I read many years ago. Question: If April showers bring May flowers, what do May flowers bring? Answer: Pilgrims!

The punch line, of course, is referring to the ship and its English passengers who landed in the year 1620 on the shores of what would become Massachusetts. By the middle of this month, thousands of pilgrims of a different sort will descend upon Jerusalem in Israel, for Jewish Passover celebrations, and for solemn Christian Holy Week observances. Jerusalem is a unique place – it is considered to be one of the most holy cities for all three of the world's major monotheistic religions. One popular tourist spot is a scenic overlook from which the Old City part of Jerusalem is seen. An iconic gold-domed building dominates the view. For decades, I thought this building was of some significance to the historical Jesus. I was surprised to discover it is the Dome of the Rock, an Islamic sacred shrine!

Some of you may know that Janet Hutchison and I earned graduate degrees in lay ministry from Saint John's Seminary in Brighton. It is where young men are formed along their journey to the priesthood for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston. There we received teaching of the principle that "there is no salvation without Jesus Christ." Does this mean that only Christians can make it to Heaven? No, of course not. What it does mean is that if God had not chosen to break into human history the way that He did, when He did, salvation would not be possible for anyone – Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists...even agnostics and atheists. If you're familiar with what is known in Catholic America as the Baltimore Catechism, you may remember that God created you and me to know, love and serve Him in this world, and to experience the joy of being with Him eternally in Heaven. Will we see there the great biblical figures like Moses and King David? I dunno...maybe. I'll have to let you know when I get there.

This year on April 21, Christians around the world celebrate Christ's resurrection from the dead. It is indeed cause for celebration because it is a reminder that in His mercy, God has given us all the opportunity one day to share eternal life with Him. Happy Easter! The Lord is risen – thanks be to God!

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