

Reflections on Easter

Rachel Buys
Chris Berthiaume
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Rachel Buys, 10, made a trip to Cuba in February with four other members of Circle of Mercy. They visited our sister church, Iglésia Getsémani, in Camagüey, and the Sigmon-Siler family, members of the Circle who are spending a year in Cuba, in Matanzas. Here are Rachel's reflections on the trip, which she shared in church on April 24, Easter Sunday:

One of the things I will always remember about the Cuba trip is when we got in the van and we got our history lesson from Kiran [Sigmon]. She talked about Che [Guevara].

At the time when Che was around, he was trying to help the Cubans have rights, because the Cuban's didn't have good medical care or education because of the president. And Che didn't think that was good. And he saw hope that he could make a change. And he made that change.

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and he made that change.***

He made an army, and he tried to make it so that people would be free and have rights. Instead of saying "You guys can do the work," he didn't sit in his office like most generals just doing paperwork. He decided he should work with people.

In one of his battles, he was winning and the government sent some medical supplies and ammunition, and he got into a bulldozer and hit the train to throw it off the train track. The person who killed Che was Felix Rodriguez, and after he killed Che, he took his Rolex watch and used it as a trophy.

The one problem with Che is that he thought that fighting would help solve problems. One of the things that he said was "*Hasta la victoria siempre*," which meant "Until victory always." And that kind of upset me, because I know that even though Che really helped to make a change, he used fighting.

Chris Berthiaume, moderator of Circle of Mercy, is a counselor with OnTrack financial services and serves as chair of the board of Just Economics. He, too, shared an Easter reflection:

Normally when I speak to groups of this size, the topic is very different. My day job, you see, is preventing foreclosure of folks in Western North Carolina, using a very particular tool. That tool can be frustrating. It's a scalpel, not an axe, as I've heard someone say.

So when I was asked to reflect tonight on resurrection, I thought, "Well, how am I going to find resurrection?" I tell you, I don't see it every day. I don't even see it often. But I did gain some insight through my reflection on resurrection, and I hope you will, too.

Resurrection is not why I come to church. It's not why I attend this Circle. It's not even why I worship Jesus. But as I worked on this reflection, I did realize that it's a part of my life—in ways that aren't always, perhaps even most of the time, obvious.

The first thing I did to prepare for today was research resurrection and topics associated with it. I thought I'd begin with how we start the Easter season. So, according to Wikipedia, "Most followers of Western Christianity observe Lent beginning on Ash Wednesday and concluding on Holy Thursday."

For me growing up, Lent meant that I gave up something. That something was usually something I really liked, but in my heart of hearts knew was bad for me. I discovered later that one could also take something on. One year, I took on staying in better touch with my family. You'll have to ask my Mom how that actually turned out.

This Lent I didn't take anything on, and I didn't give anything up. Because, as it turns out, my Lent—and by that I mean a time of turmoil and a time when I needed more—started a little bit early.

I had barely finished Christmas when my Lent began. I found myself in rough, uncharted water in my work life, my leadership roles at Circle of Mercy, and at Just Economics, where I'm also chair. Now,

I'm getting more and more used to faking my way through things I've never done before, but between you and me...faking only takes you so far. Real quick, my Lent got real real. I mean *really* real.

Now during my reflection, it was here when I made the connection, where the light turned on for me. But again, my liturgical year didn't seem to be on track with the church's. Can anybody relate to that?

Easter came early. A week or so ago, I was reborn. The rough waters of the past few months calmed, and the sun re-emerged from behind the clouds of misunderstanding, dispute, mistrust, and anxiety. I felt different. I felt/feel revitalized to my work, my relationships, and to the fact that things aren't always going to be sunshine and roses as we try to walk this walk, and that's OK.

So, are you following me, Circle? This is resurrection for me. This is why resurrection and the Easter season are foundational to our faith. I couldn't keep doing it otherwise.

I have to believe that things can be reborn; that I can be reborn.

I have to believe that things can be reborn; that I can be reborn. That people and tough situations will come around. On this journey we're taking together, we'll go through bogs and briars, and we'll have to summit jagged pinnacles, and we'll have to reach down beneath heavy stones, and we might have to do them sooner than we ever thought we would.

As I said in the beginning, I was pretty stumped by the request to share tonight, and I wasn't too sure, even when I just got up to speak, how the whole thing was going to go. I do think I've realized that it's resurrection—and my belief that we all really do get second chances—that keeps me on this trip with you. Thank you for travelling with me.