



Silent Stirrings in the Tomb

But I shall be wise this time and wait in the dark ... (Rabindranath Tagore).

I like to envision myself outside the emptied Easter tomb, sitting there with the joyful angel or marvelling with the surprised Mary as she hurries away to announce the good news of resurrection (John 20:1-2). But the thought of being inside that airless, eerie tomb with its damp smell of death does not entice me at all. My strong inclination toward light bids me to ignore Holy Saturday, the day of 'in between'. The part of me that resists waiting wants to hide from the unknown and the uncontrolled, while resurrection with its abundant, vibrant life attracts me. I'd much rather forget the Easter tomb was once occupied or that the tiny green bud on the bush once found itself encased in ice and snow. In the same way, I tend to forget that the wisdoms guiding my life once lay dormant in the dim corridors of myself.

I wonder if it might be this way for most people. I have certainly found this to be the case with my own Christian faith. Most pastors and parishioners ignore Holy Saturday and the celebration of Easter. Whatever happened to the significant, symbolic event of time in the tomb? This absolutely essential part of the story tends to be ignored, set aside, or forgotten. Yet, Easter cannot happen without this waiting stage.

Resurrection occurs only after the tomb encloses a resident. Psychologist C G Jung indicates the tomb or cave as the place where 'a person goes when there is a great work to be accomplished, an effort from which one recoils.' Renewal, whether of the earth or the human heart, contains its own 'Holy Saturday' when the darkness smells of death and shows no evidence of movement. Yet, unseen during this period, life stirs, moves, and changes into something surprising.

I do not intend to sound poetic or idealistic when writing about the tomb as a gestation time. There's nothing 'romantic' about interior darkness. Just ask anyone who is languishing in memories of a loved one who's died, or who is excruciatingly ill, or despairing to the point of contemplating suicide, or desperately clutching at the last bits of self-worth. These people do not experience darkness as some charming companion who comes along and says, 'I have a new revelation for you.'

This place of 'in between', contains agonising silence and painful hollowness. Throughout the ages, various sages and writers have attempted to describe it: tomb, underworld, womb, cave, desert, chrysalis, and so on. The metaphors all bear the same mark: a dark, waiting space of transformation.

Source: Joyce Rupp OSM, *Little Pieces of Light*, 2016

REFLECTION

> What darkness is awaiting transformation in your life?