

SURPRISE!

Matthew 28:20 - And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age.

Mark 16:6 (LB) - But the angel said, "Don't be so surprised. Aren't you looking for Jesus, the Nazarene who was crucified? He isn't here! He has come back to life! Look, that's where his body was lying."

The incredible truth of Easter is not that we will have new life after death, but that we are to have new life right here and now by the power of the Resurrection. Not so much that we are to live forever but that we are to live now nobly and lovingly, with great hope and joy because we are to live forever.

There is a story of a little girl named Nicole. She was as anxious for Easter to come as she had been for Christmas. She had picked out a new dress for church and mother had given her a beautiful white bonnet. Her father was taking her to buy a pair of shoes to go with her outfit, when she loudly professed, once again, "I can't wait for Easter to come, Daddy!" At this point her daddy turned to her and asked, "Honey, do you know what Easter means?" "Yes," she said. So he asked her, "Well, what does Easter mean?" In her own sweet three-year old way, with arms raised in the air, a smile on her face, and at the top of her voice she said, "Surprise!" And really what better word could sum up the meaning of Easter? Surprise, death! Surprise, sin! Surprise, mourning disciples! Surprise, modern man! He is alive!!! Christ has risen!!!

And I wonder, what are the words we would use to describe Easter? Would our hands be in the air? Would there be smiles on our faces? What would we shout at the top of our voices?

What enormous love!!! May our spirits join Nicole's as we WELCOME with HOPE and GRATITUDE the SURPRISE of EASTER!!!

Join me as we walk to the Cross with Jesus and in doing so discover his enormous gift of love and forgiveness for each of us. And in the perfect love of Easter, may we become empowered to pass the gift on to others.

Prayer: Loving and forgiving Lord, fill us this day with your perfect love. Remove all of our excuses or reasons for feeling unworthy of such love and let us receive your grace and forgiveness so that we may experience new life and hope beginning this day. In this season of Lent, let us be as loving with those in our lives as you are with us. Help us to seek you with our whole hearts, so that we might truly begin to understand the Miracle of Easter!!! In your precious name we pray. Amen