

## SMT Article 4/17/20 “A Day Here and There”

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It's been nearly a week. Normally, the week after Easter has us engaged in the yearly debate about whether there is any inherent value in Peeps. It normally consists of activities like unwinding plastic basket-filler grass out of the carpet fibers and considering that perhaps we really *did* overdue it on the chocolate this year (or the jelly beans, or the deviled eggs). Normally, this is the week that sets our feet firmly into spring and positions us on the chute that will soon whisk us through to the end of the school year and sail us onward into the summer season.

But things aren't quite normal right now, are they? The pastels of the season look a little duller when we're looking at them through the window panes of our homes. The joy of the season feels a little duller without having heard the squeals of children racing around Lacy Park on the hunt for Easter eggs. It's been hard to celebrate a holiday that declares the Good News of Life—and life to the full!—when the world that we live in is currently defined by sickness, job loss, isolation, and death.

But this year's week-after-Easter isn't the first week-after-Easter to be characterized by confusion, fear, and death. The first week-after-Easter that was painful and difficult for people to live through was the week that followed that very first Easter day.

The Gospel of John tells a story that perhaps sounds more familiar to us this year than it did in recent years past. In that story, what was once considered to be certain was suddenly thrown into question. The friends of Jesus ran to the place where they had left his body only to find nothing, and so they left in fear and confusion. The women stood by the empty tomb in tears, inconsolable. Fearful for their lives and afraid of the unknown future, they all locked themselves into a room and hid, leaving only when they must.

It was a terrible, fearful, confusing week for the friends of Jesus of Nazareth. After that first Easter, none of them could be certain about what each new week might surprise them with. After that first Easter, all of them sensed that there would be a new definition for 'normal' going ahead.

For Jesus' friends, that first Easter Day was not joyful. Neither was the week that followed. If they were waiting for the joy and certainty to come crashing back to them one day, if they were waiting for their lives to return to what they had always known, they never got it.

But they weren't left in their confusion, hurt, and fear forever. One day they received news that Jesus was seen on the road, talking and laughing with men over a meal. Then another day came when a man, whom they thought could be Jesus, showed up in the room where they were hiding and kept them company for a while. One day here and one day there, a new story was being written: one where sorrow wouldn't have the last word; one where confusion would be clarified; one where hope would be woven out of the torn fabric of their past certainties.

One day here and one day there will come for us too. It's difficult for us to imagine life, and life to the full, particularly in a time that threatens to take so much from our lives. But already, we see hope being woven into our new normal, sewn in the stitches of home-made masks. And already, we see courage dressed in scrubs overcoming fear. The new normal is already breaking in, one day here and one day there.