

There are many things I love about this night. But one thing in particular is this. We sing. And we do it a lot. But one song in particular is particularly striking. Striking in that we are invited to sing before we know, before we even begin to understand.

Think about it. We came in here in the dark. We lit a fire. We passed the light from one person to another, one small flame at a time, until the whole room began to glow. And then we heard that ancient song – The Exultet. “*Rejoice now*”, we proclaim. “*This is the night.*” Not an explanation. Not a set of instructions. Just joy. Pure joy! Joy declared before it makes sense. Joy before we understand. And we sing about it.

And it struck me this week that this is not the first time our faith has sounded like this. Before Mary knew, she sang. Before she understood what the angel meant, before she could see how any of it would unfold, before she had answers to the questions that must have been racing through her mind, she sang her song.

And that song, the Magnificat, is not soft or sentimental. It is a song of trust and defiance. Trust that God is doing something new, even when she cannot yet see it. Defiance against everything that says the world will always stay the way it is. She sings about the proud being scattered, the powerful brought down, the lowly lifted up.

She sings all of that before any of it has happened.

And, here we are again. Before we understand resurrection, we sing. Before we can explain how life comes out of death, we sing. Before the fear settles, before the ground stops shaking, before we know what comes next, we sing. Maybe this is just how God’s people have always moved through the world, not by waiting until everything is clear, but by trusting that the song can carry us into what we do not yet know.

Meanwhile, over in the Gospel, Matthew does not give us a quiet, peaceful sunrise and song. He gives us an earthquake. The ground shakes. An angel appears. The guards faint. And the women, so faithful and brave, are terrified. I mean, they do not say, “Ah yes, resurrection. Just as we expected.” They run, afraid and trying to make sense of something that does not make sense yet. Wouldn’t you?

And somehow, we in the Church read that story, full of confusion and shaking ground, and say, hey, that’s perfect. Let’s sing.

And then there is Paul, who calmly informs us that we have been “*buried with Christ.*” Buried. Not improved. Not inspired. Buried. Buried, so that we might “*walk in newness of life.*” Which sounds beautiful, until you realize we are not always sure what that new life looks like yet. We know something has ended. And we trust something has begun. But we are still learning how to walk, and sometimes that new life feels less like a sunrise and more like standing on ground that is has not stopped shaking beneath us yet.

So why does the Church sing first? Why not wait until everything is clear? Maybe because the Church knows something about us. She knows that if we wait until everything makes sense, we might never begin. So instead, we are given a song. How Episcopalian is that?

Because singing is something we know how to do when words fall short. We sing when a child is born. We sing when someone we love dies. We sing at weddings and around tables and in quiet moments when something in us reaches for hope. Not because everything is resolved, but because something deep and true is already happening. And so, the Church, in all her ancient wisdom, says do not wait. Sing now.

And so, tonight we did not just sing with our voices. We sang with light. We took one small flame and passed it, and then someone passed it again, and again, until what began as a single point of light became something shared, something that filled the whole space. Not because the darkness disappeared, but because the light of Christ was enough.

There is a line in that Easter song we heard. "*This is the night.*" It keeps repeating it. This is the night when Christ broke the bonds of death. This is the night when we are restored to grace. This is the night when earth and heaven are joined. Not this is the explanation. Just this is the night. As if to say even if you do not fully understand it, you are already inside it.

And I love this. Some versions of that ancient Easter song even pause, right in the middle of all that grandeur, to give thanks for the bees who made the candle. The bees. Which feels almost a little ridiculous, and also exactly right. Because it reminds us that resurrection is not just an idea floating out there somewhere. It is embodied. It is tangible. It is shared. It involves wax and fire and human hands, and apparently bees. It is the kind of thing that happens in real life, not just in theory.

So, if you came tonight with questions, you are doing it exactly right. If you are not sure what resurrection means in your life yet, you are in very good company. Because the first witnesses did not understand it either. They were afraid. They were confused. They were running on instinct and hope and something they could not yet name. But they moved. They went. And somewhere along the way, they met the risen Christ.

And maybe that is how this works for us too. Not all at once, not in a moment of perfect clarity, but step by step, light by light, song by song. Before Mary knew, she sang. Before we understand, we sing.

We sing in the dark.

We sing while the ground still feels unsteady beneath our feet.

We sing because the story is already unfolding, even if we cannot yet see the ending.

We sing because Christ is risen, even as we are still figuring out what that means for us.

We sing because sometimes the song is what carries us, until understanding catches up.

So tonight, you do not have to have it all figured out. You do not have to explain resurrection. You do not even have to feel completely certain. You just have to do what the Church has always done on this night.

Hold the light.

Stay with the story.

And keep singing.

Because somehow, through earthquakes and questions and candles and even bees, God is still bringing life out of death. And we are learning, together, what that means.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!