



Sunflower Seeds

Celebrating Everyday Spirituality



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The Week We Call Holy

by MELANNIE SVOBODA SND on APRIL 2, 2012.

This week is Holy Week. We call it “Holy” because this is the week we commemorate the essence of the Paschal Mystery, that is, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. On Thursday we commemorate the Last Supper when Jesus instituted the Eucharist as a way of staying with us in time forever. That day we also reenact Jesus’ loving action: the washing of the feet of his disciples. This ritual reminds us that following Jesus essentially means this: to serve others.

On Good Friday we commemorate Jesus’ death. In a church devoid of decorations, we listen to the reading of the passion and reverence the cross as the instrument of our salvation. Ironically, no Mass is celebrated on Good Friday. Hosts that were consecrated the previous day are consumed at this service. Holy Saturday is a quiet day liturgically. But many churches are anything but quiet as sacristans and other workers begin to decorate the church with lilies, azaleas, daffodils, candles and ribbons for Easter. The formal Easter celebration begins on Saturday night with the Easter Vigil. This beautiful service begins around an open fire with the lighting of the Easter candle, a symbol of Jesus himself. Into the darkened church the congregation processes with their lighted candles. The readings recall the story of first Exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt and the new Exodus, Jesus’ passing from death to life. Amid Easter lilies, candles and beautiful music, the Masses on Easter Sunday continue this festive Easter celebration.

During Holy Week, we do not merely “commemorate” Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection; *we enter into it with our lives*. This means we bring to each of the services our own joys, struggles, hopes, dreams, sufferings, and love. We reaffirm our love for Jesus who loves us more than we could ever imagine. We marvel at his great sufferings, yes, but we marvel more at the great love that enabled him to bear such horrific pain. We see that the power of the resurrection is not limited to an event that

About Sister Melannie Svoboda, SND

Sister of Notre Dame,
teacher, student, author,
speaker, listener, friend,
poet, farm girl.



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About Sunflower Seeds

Each Monday I’ll post a short reflection, a simple musing on some aspect of spirituality— the everyday kind of spirituality that



includes things like walking in the park, slicing an onion for the casserole, caring for a child, studying for an exam, reading a line from scripture, laughing at a joke, or mourning a significant loss.

Along the way I welcome your questions, comments and insights too. After all, we’re all in this life—this spiritual life—together!

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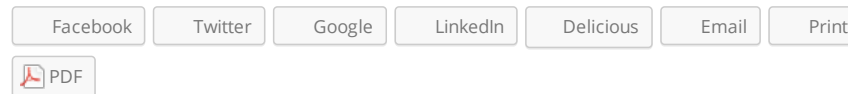
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happened over 2,000 years ago. The power of the resurrection is active and alive in our world today. Where? Wherever we see people serving others, praying every day, helping the weak and vulnerable, being honest and ethical, bearing crosses with dignity and courage, being faithful to their commitments, hoping despite struggles and setbacks, and working together tirelessly for a better world.

Happy Holy Week and Happy Easter!

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Candice Lyons April 2, 2012 at 10:28 am 

Beautiful words, Sister. Thank you. Blessings to you and all your Sisters.

REPLY

Melannie Svoboda SND April 2, 2012 at 2:58 pm 

Thank you, Candice! Blessing to you too!

REPLY

ML April 2, 2012 at 10:30 am 

My co-worker and I recently had the pleasure of leading a group of college students and young adults on an immersion trip/mission trip to El Salvador in which we experienced an "early" Holy Week.

During our eight days, most of which were spent in two rural mountain communities in Chalatenango, we heard story after story of people surviving great losses in the midst of civil war (1980-1992), abject poverty and the everyday grind of life. Our host priest, with whom our parish has a longstanding relationship and who serves his people selflessly, introduced us to many of these humble folks and

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helped us to see that even though there is much hardship, joy and hope are still very much present. Nowhere was this more palpable than on Saturday, March 24 in San Salvador, the final night of our trip, when our group participated in a candlelight procession for the 32nd anniversary of Oscar Romero's martyrdom. Before Romero's life was taken so dramatically, he said that if he was killed, he would rise again in the Salvadoran people.

As darkness fell in the city, a place characterized as dangerous because of gang violence, we marched by candlelight alongside our sisters and brothers in San Salvador. Even though we were not there during the Civil War (most of us weren't even born when Romero was murdered!), after hearing the stories throughout the week, we entered into the experience together and were in solidarity with our sisters and brothers. We felt no danger, only peace and Resurrection, reflecting the great truth of your post, that "We see that the power of the resurrection is not limited to an event that happened over 2,000 years ago."

I will certainly view Holy Week this week with a new set of lenses, as I imagine many of our young adults will, too. What a blessing!

REPLY

Melannie Svoboda SND April 2, 2012 at 2:58 pm

Thank you for your beautiful sharing of an unforgettable Holy Week! I was touched by your words!



REPLY

Ellen Svette Huntsman April 2, 2012 at 2:35 pm

Hello Sister, I am Kathy's cousin. I am so happy to receive your Sunflower Seeds reflections. Today's in particular, was very inspiring and enlightend the meaning of the "Holy Week".



My late daughter was named Melanie. She whould have loved your reflections. 😊

Peace and blessings
for a beautiful Holy Week

REPLY

Melannie Svoboda SND April 2, 2012 at 2:56 pm

Welcome to the blog, Ellen. I will say a special prayer for you and your Melanie.



REPLY

Ellen Svette Huntsman April 2, 2012 at 5:32 pm
Thank you Sister.



REPLY

Shauna Bankemper April 5, 2012 at 8:43 am



Happy Easter, Melannie! Thank you for your inspiring words. You have a gift for raising New Life from the ordinary! Thanks for sharing! Blessings on Easter and throughout the Easter Season.

REPLY

Melannie Svoboda SND April 7, 2012 at 11:21 am
And Happy Easter to you too, Shauna!



REPLY

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