

Holy Saturday 2015

Holy Saturday: Entombment

At the end of his life, Jesus is swaddled a second time and laid in a tomb. We know from the Apostles' Creed that during entombment, he descended into hell to bring out the souls of the just who had died before atonement (at-one-ment). Jesus was doing the work he had agreed to do. But no one saw him.

The time between death and resurrection is a time of great interior activity for Jesus – it was hidden from others. The same is true for one's spiritual journey. Hidden from others are the arduous efforts to re-member and embrace a long-forgotten aspect of the True Self. It is solitary, hellish work to face the shadow side of ourselves. But it is necessary in order to recognize and love the full sum of who we are, warts and all, as God already does.

During entombment we unbind ourselves, taking the wraps off those old wounds that keep us captive to the past. Descending into hell, we bring into new life those parts of ourselves that have been hidden by pain, fear, and lies, thus emerging into the Easter garden.

Just like a butterfly's efforts to emerge from the cocoon, ours is a solitary struggle. The larvae, ensconced safely inside the cocoon, slowly changes from a rather ugly worm-like creature that wiggles and crawls to one that takes flight on gossamer wings, swooping and darting among garden flowers. In a science experiment, it was discovered that when a researcher slit a cocoon to allow the butterfly easier access to freedom, the butterfly died. It seems that the very act of inner struggle, beatings its wings against the cocoon to release itself, strengthened the butterfly for flight.

The same is true for our spiritual journey. There are no short cuts. No one can do the inner work for us. The rigors of entombment and atonement are private and personal. The only evidence that remains are the burial clothes left behind in the tomb.

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