



Easter

Very soon we'll be celebrating Easter. Easter is the most important event in our church. Along with Easter comes holidays, chocolate, roast lamb, good wine, guests, getting together, memories, maybe a church service and above all Easter eggs.

I once heard a story about a school class who was preparing for Easter, and each one of them was given a hollow Easter egg to take home. They were then given the task to put something inside the egg that symbolised Easter. When they returned to the class room, the teacher started opening the eggs one by one and shared the precious Easter symbols with the whole class. The pupils had put things like daffodils, chocolate, an Easter bunny, a little lamb, a drawing of a church and a sunrise, and many other lovely happy symbols. But one egg was empty. The teacher was somewhat displeased and asked who it was that hadn't done their homework. The pupil who had brought the empty egg, put his hand up and answered, "I did, and I did do my homework. My egg is empty, like the tomb on Easter morning."

And that's how the empty egg, like the tomb on Easter morning became the greatest and clearest symbol for Easter, the resurrection and new life. Being a pastor my heart melts at this, and I think that here's a model student who not only knows Easter, but also understands the Easter message: On the face of it an empty tomb or an empty Easter egg signals disappointment, grief, frustration and emptiness – this is an understandable human response.



Most people and societies today have experienced this emptiness and a kind of void. It may happen when we lose a loved one, when something is over, the end of an era or when a purpose has disappeared. Then a void appears and a feeling of emptiness. It's a space and a feeling which is extremely uncomfortable, which no-one is prepared for, and which no-one can escape. The interesting thing is that very few of us want to be in this void or can handle the feeling of emptiness. That is why our society has so many cases of excess and abuse everywhere. The pace keeps getting faster, we're constantly on the move, we eat comfort food, over-consume, work and exercise relentlessly, we're in a constant rush, constantly online and we run away so we don't have to feel or be forced to be in the void. Quite simply, we're afraid of the emptiness.

Seen in the light of Easter, the void and the empty tomb is where eternal life springs. The empty tomb is a symbol of Jesus' resurrection. It's in a tomb, at the end of something, that death is defeated and something new is given to us. This is where new possibilities emerge, and this is where we get to be humans and carry on living – without having to work for it or without having earned it. But it does require us to have the courage to be quiet once in a while, to dare face grief when something is over, to dare stop and be present right where we are, and where there may not be a lot of action. We have to dare to be quiet, take our time, and wait when that is required, and at which point we dare explore the new possibilities and new acquaintances being handed to us. When we are in the void and have become so quiet that we can see and hear all the new possibilities and new life coming our way.

Happy Easter.

Pastor Anja G. Mathiassen