

Easter, as Luke tells the story, is the day of openings. The women found the stone rolled away from the tomb; the tomb was *opened* for them.

Walking and talking their way to Emmaus, two disciples cannot make sense of all that had happened in Jerusalem. They are joined by a stranger. He listens and responds *How dull (foolish) you are!* Then, starting from Moses and all the prophets, he explains the meaning of the events.

The disciples are not too offended to invite the stranger to dinner. He becomes the host, blesses, breaks and shares the bread with them and their eyes are *opened*. *Was not our heart burning within us while he spoke to us on the road, as he opened the scriptures to us?* (Luke 24:32)

The disciples hurry back to Jerusalem to tell the others of their experience. As they tell their story, Jesus appears. The disciples are startled and frightened. Jesus reassures them, and *opens* their minds to understand the scriptures. (Luke 24:45)

What didn't the disciples understand? That the Messiah would suffer. The Israelites, schooled by the prophet Isaiah, understood the notion of a suffering servant, saw themselves as God's suffering servant. But the idea a suffering Messiah was foreseen by no one.

To see this possibility required that minds be *opened*. The disciples could no more open their minds to this reality than the women could roll away the stone from the tomb. Just as the tomb had to be *opened* by a greater power, so the minds of the disciples had to be *opened* by a revelation of new creation.

Marilynne Robinson reports, "When I was in high school, I had a teacher who said to our class, you will have to live with your mind every day of your life. You build your mind, so make sure you have a mind that you want to live with. I don't think anybody ever told me anything that had a bigger impact on my life. We are creatures of education. We educate ourselves continuously, badly or well."

In her book *Absence of Mind*, Robinson writes, "The mind, whatever else it is, is a constant of everyone's experience, and, in more and other ways than we know, the creator of the reality we live within, that we live by and for and despite, and that, often enough, we die from. Nothing is more essential to us."

We have been educated to believe the resurrected body will be brand-new, that it will be free of any of the things that bug, pain, or frustrate us, which is a wonderful hope. Yet, the gospels never depict Jesus as being free of his scars.

I'll bet most of us have a few scars, and every one of them has a story to tell. Josh explained to his daughter that the long scar on his left ankle was from an attempt to

steal third base during a church league softball game. The scar on his right wrist was from a bike wreck when he was twelve, and the one on his ear was from the chicken pox when he was five. In telling about his scars he is telling his story.

Jesus' scars tell his story. They tell a story of resisting the dehumanizing forces of empire by insisting on a God who sees everyone as valuable, a God who has numbered every hair on our heads, a God whose kingdom is just and generous, with an embrace wide enough for anyone and everyone.

Jesus' scars tell a story of refusing violence in favor of peacemaking and returning love in the face of hatred. They are reminders of immense suffering and agony, signs of a failed mission. Yet the risen Jesus embraces his scars and uses them to comfort his disciples and confirm his identity. For Jesus' followers, his scars are a certificate of authenticity.

Jesus schooled the disciples minds to see God and life in a new light. The risen Christ allows his pain to be transformed and, as a result, allows healing and hope to flow from his wounds to his disciples and beyond. "If we do not transform our pain," says Richard Rohr, "we will most assuredly transmit it."

Milton, in "Paradise Lost," gives Satan the line *The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.* We are in a very great degree the creators of the reality we inhabit. We have an important ability to decide what in our minds we choose to attend to—and therefore what our lives will be. Easter opens our minds to the possibility and promise of healing and hope.