

Forty Days  
**SETTING OUT ONCE AGAIN**  
*Easter//Resurrection Sunday Video*

From the stale darkness,  
he rises into the light,  
bright rays of sun split the tops of trees,  
and clouds depart  
and blue fills sky  
the smell of angels lingers in the air—  
his hair feels the cool breeze again

This was not the garden,  
but a new world  
made from the eruption of hope  
and a life that could not be held down.  
We were witnesses to the life  
that rose from the dead  
God's relentless love,  
who comes close to us  
moving stones from tombs  
opening the heart to another possibility  
death no longer stands

My heart races in my chest  
as I step forward to face the future  
my future  
that I grasp with open hands  
with new naïveté  
a child toward a mother  
to be held and lifted up,  
and cradled with care.  
At times I hesitate  
and I grasp onto memories of what once was  
but I know that I am not alone in my apprehension  
I feel the hands of others holding me.  
These are my sisters, my brother

who are not strangers to my fears and frailties  
who have also confronted a hope that frightens them  
    who can feel their own scars, both fresh and old  
they step in pace with me  
    the weeping women at the gravesite  
    the scared disciples waiting in the upper room.

This is our future  
    where we walk together  
    toward our new home  
        built by the hands of a wounded king  
the new Zion  
    forsaking the kingdoms marked by borders and divides  
    where all our settlements are only temporary shelters  
    sanctuaries of rest for the wounded and weary

Then the Christ returns to visit us,  
    as Galilee's boats pull to shore  
these places seem familiar—  
    the lapping water and the sand  
    but we are not to return to these lands  
    nor those dreams  
        but become pilgrims  
        to set our belongings in another home  
    to wash our sandy feet in some other place,  
to lay down our tired souls  
    on a distant promise,  
        quilted from both the today and the tomorrow.

And we dine as a day sees another setting sun  
    sitting across from each other once again  
    seeing each sweet face  
        laughing deeply  
        feeling whole once more

And we see the Savior's smile,  
    he knows our journey's end  
    and pours us another cup  
    full of his own love

and this time,  
our eyes tell him that we understand.

### ***Questions for Reflection***

1. New life does not mean a return to the Garden, but entering a new world. How is this world a different world than before the resurrection? Do you see glimpses of this in your life?
2. “At times I hesitate/and I grasp onto memories of what once was”... speak of the apprehension of moving toward a new future. What might make you hesitant in taking a step toward a new beginning? How might your community help you make this step?
3. How are the places of this world only “temporary shelters” compared to what God is building as God’s Kingdom?
4. Christ returned to the same fishermen who abandoned him, people like Peter who denied him. However, Christ’s return was not so that they could return to their former vocations, but that they could continue to journey with him. How is Christ calling you “not to return to these lands/nor those dreams”?
5. The last two stanzas are an invitation to the Eucharist, i.e. an invitation into communion with Christ, to sit at his table and dine with him. How does the event of the resurrection help us see Christ differently? How does it change our understanding of the one in whom we have been following?

### **Practices of Lent**

The word “resurrection” is a Latin derivative from the Greek word, *anastasis*, which means “to stand again.” The resurrection is God getting up, standing again even after the tragic event of the cross. Death is not the final word in God’s story, but life and hope are. We are joined with Christ in the experience of the resurrection. Our failures and losses are not the last word, but God’s power can lift us out of the pit of death and into new life.

In this way, the Christian life is the resurrected life. We, like newborn infants, are learning to walk in this new kind of life. It is a life that does not fear the finality of death. It does not seek to amass fame or fortune so to keep death

from knocking at the door. Christians are called to learn to live the Kingdom of the Resurrected Christ. This means living in a world of hope that pushes away the skepticism of this world. It means building on a faith that God is restoring all things new, and making a place for all of humanity. It means trusting that deep and lasting relationships will exist to push back broken commitments and lost trust.

Resurrection means a “standing up” for all humanity, not just in the next life, but in this world. This is the difference that Christ’s victory has made in this world. If the resurrection had never happen, the violence, death, and hatred would have continued many times over. This world would be a much darker place. Because of the resurrection, people like Oscar Romero, Martin Luther King Jr., Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Mother Teresa, and many others had the courage to stand up to oppression and injustice to create, with Jesus, a world of peace.

The first stanza, “bright rays of sun split the tops of trees,/and clouds depart/and blue fills sky,” was written before the filming of the video. The director, Josh Spires, told me that the day of filming started off cloudy, but when the scene was shot the sun pushed back the clouds in its bright splendor. None of the footage was stock or CGI; it was all done on sight. This is not to say that every moment of a person’s life is this kind of “resurrection” moment, but God showed us in the resurrection that life could not be swallowed up in the tomb. It presses forward, into our lives. How can you live in this kind of new world, in the Kingdom of the Resurrected Christ? There is still plenty to be done in this world, but Christ invites us to join in this work of recreating God’s new dream.

*Alleluia. Christ is risen.  
He is risen indeed. Alleluia*

Phuc Luu

### ***Further Reading***

Malcolm Guite, *Word in the Wilderness: A Poem a Day for Lent and Easter* (Canterbury Press Norwich, 2014).

Henri J. M. Nouwen, Judy Bauer ed., *Lent and Easter Wisdom from Henri J. M. Nouwen*, (Liguori, 2005), Daily Scripture and prayers together with Nouwen's own words.