



# Simple Gifts

Words to Inspire the Spirit

IMMANUEL CHURCH-ON-THE-HILL

April 26, 2022

## Recalibrating our Gauges

By The Rev. J. Randolph Alexander, Jr.

When my mother was still driving, she was a model driver – respectful, a follower of the rules of the road, a model citizen. So, she was very surprised when a policeman started following her one day on the interstate, then turned on his lights, and then pulled her over.

It was even more surprising when he came up to her window and said, “Lady, don’t you think the law applies to you?” He had clocked her going about 85 miles an hour in a 55 miles-per-hour zone. Yet, this came as a complete surprise to her, since her speedometer showed that she was going no more than 60. She finally convinced the police officer that the speedometer had been giving her faulty information. He gave her a ticket anyway but said that the ticket could be reversed if she could prove that her gauge had to be recalibrated. Indeed, the gauge was faulty, and the ticket was expunged.

It’s striking for me to consider how much she, and all of us, are dependent upon our various gauges, literal and metaphoric. As long as the gauge tells

us we are within normal limits, we believe that we are. Yet, we forget how easily our culture can mess with our gauges, metaphorically speaking.

Easter is the biggest recalibration we can imagine. We live our lives under the tyranny of the clock, the calendar, and the passing seasons, inexorably heading towards death. It is easy to think that those gauges are all that really matter, and that the attitude *carpe diem* – seize the day – is the only way to wrest some meaning from the hands on that tyrannical clock.

Yet Easter tells us that death is an already-defeated enemy, that the God we worship and follow has already defeated death in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. God has literally walked through that door ahead of us and shown us that there is life, and hope, and beauty on the other side. As St. Paul says, “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” (1 Corinthians 15:55).

In addition, the message of Easter also speaks of God bringing forth all sorts of new life where we might have only thought there was death and finality. Easter speaks of forgiveness and fresh starts and new horizons. Easter speaks of meaning that transcends the limits of our five senses and our finite imaginations.

The Church and its community are one of the chief places where our gauges can be recalibrated, where we are challenged to ask what really matters, what life and death are all about, what success might look like, and what God’s unending, outrageous, and scandalous love towards us might feel like. That is the truth so many of the authors of Scripture and the great classic composers of hymns and choral music are trying to engage.

Left to our own devices, we could just keep following our own gauges until we drive right off the road. Thank God for the opportunity to recalibrate. Each time we attend to the witness of Scripture or take seriously the opportunity of confession and amendment of life, or receive the Sacraments, or give of ourselves towards a cause greater than ourselves, our gauges are refreshed and renewed, and we can trust them more fully.

In the process, we are becoming more fully human, more the person God dreams us to be, and more the person we, in our heart of hearts, want to be, as well.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!  
The Lord is Risen Indeed, Alleluia!