

Easter Vigil – 2024
Christ is Risen! Alleluia, Alleluia!

We all love a good story, whether it's through books, movies, or in person. We have found numerous ways to tell stories through various mediums because, in the depths of our being, we all desire a good story. This desire is much deeper than mere entertainment. Stories take us deeper into our own lives and the world around us, and the most successful stories have a happy ending. Human beings are Story Beings, with a particular desire for a happy ending. Ever wondered why?

We want to know that our life experiences, struggles, desires, and work are meaningful, and when we see that they matter in the books we read or movies we watch, we feel a certain assurance of hope. They encourage us to continue with our own life stories. Good stories help us know that life matters and that good will eventually win in the end. Even with many people saying that nothing matters in the end, we still see that the only movies that make any money are the ones that say that life does matter and that no matter what happens, good will eventually win. If the end of a story is total defeat, we don't like it, something in the depths of our being protest against it. ***In this sense, we are all protestants of a bad ending.***

The Bible itself consists of hundreds of stories, some with good endings and some with sad ones. Nevertheless, there is a big story, a grand story, a metanarrative, told from the beginning of Genesis, the first book of the Bible to Revelation, the last book of the scriptures. **A Metanarrative is “A single, overarching interpretation, or grand story of all reality.”**

As we celebrate the Easter Vigil tonight, we are celebrating the Climax of this Christian Metanarrative, our Christian Worldview which has the capacity to **satisfy and save fully the human heart, mind, and soul.** All other grand

stories or metanarratives fall short of what we are truly searching for and leave us restless. I will mention a few as we go.

The problem with our times is that many people do not have a Grand Story, to refer to and begin to understand reality. With the increase of Secular Humanism - the naturalist worldview that only believes in the current life and rejects faith, God and any reference to an afterlife leave people in Cosmic Vacuum, making them question the meaning and purpose of their lives here on earth. As a psychotherapist, I encounter hundreds of such people, depressed and anxious because their lives do not make much sense if death is the end after all they have been through in this life. Particularly in the evening of life, one can despair not knowing what was all this for.

Our postmodern culture believes that the problem with humanity is that they adhere to Metanarratives/Grand stories in the first place. It's these "truth claims" that cause problems, intolerance, and hate. So the solution is relativism, we need to abandon this idea of "Truth" and each person should live and find his truth, they propose. We have thus put enormous pressure on our young people, they now have to figure out what life is, why they are here, and what the truth of the universe is, they have to reinvent the wheel all for themselves, no wonder they are anxious about pretty much everything.

In the Metanarrative/Worldview of the new age spirituality, we are all energy, and there was no real beginning to us, we have always been; the problem with humanity according to the new age spiritual gurus is our inner disconnection with our true selves, and thus the solution is introspection to find goodness within. However, without the truth, beauty, and goodness of God, the soul will never be satisfied with the goodness they find only in themselves.

Other Metanarratives include other religious traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and political ideologies such as Marxism are all on the rise. People who adhere to these faiths and worldviews agree that there is such a Grand Story that explains reality but differs drastically from the Christian View. A deep analysis of them further leaves us utterly dissatisfied.

As Christians we acknowledge and profess a Grand Story or a Metanarrative is being told by human history. A loving God creates everything in the beginning – **“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”** The world was created perfect by a personal God who cares about it. We are loved into life to share in God’s goodness and life forever with no sin or death.

Then comes the plot as it were, the problem of sin and death. We expect that any good story will have some drama and trauma and things will go wrong in the middle. **We expect that because that is what happened to us as a human race.** Things went wrong for us. In Genesis 3 the problem begins. The serpent tricks the woman into sinning, and the man willingly follows her into sin as well. With this disobedience, a countless amount of despair, death, and pain arrived for humanity. And the worst part of it is that we brought it upon ourselves with our disobedience. In Adam, we all fell.

The solution Christianity proposes is not a political ideology like Marxism, nor a spirituality among many other spiritualities, nor a religion among many other religions. The solution God has promised from the beginning is **a Person, a Saviour, a Messiah - The person of Jesus Christ.** Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection are at the heart of the solution. In this paschal mystery, we can find all we truly desire. Only Christ’s life, suffering, pain, death, and resurrection could begin to explain our story of life, and our pain and restore our hope in life and incorporate us into the Grand Story of life. *So, if you are here tonight celebrating the bodily and literal resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead,*

you are a blessed person. Somehow you have stumbled into the truth of life. However, rather than patting ourselves on the back for being on **the way, the truth, and the life**, as we follow Christ, we need to take the words of Jesus seriously. They have the weight that none of the other religious leaders or gurus ever had. *All other prophets, religious leaders, philosophers, and geniuses are dead after saying what they had to say, none of them could back them up with coming back to life.* But Jesus did! He has defeated death and conquered sin. He has written the happy ending of the Christian Grand Story in which you and I have full participation.

So let us bring our life stories to the Risen Lord Jesus tonight, wherever we find ourselves in our journey of life. Let us allow him to heal our wounds, save us from sin, and restore us to the life that he wants us to live. Let him breathe his risen life into the dead areas of our lives. **If our hope is dead let him resurrect our hope, if our love is dead let Jesus resurrect our love, if our faith is dead let him resurrect faith** into our hearts. Christian Grand Story is the greatest Love Story ever told. **A God of love created us, forgiving and redeeming us through the death of his Son and Restoring us to our original immortality and dignity by rising from the dead so that we could go to heaven and live Happily Ever After – Literally.**

Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia, Alleluia