

Easter Sunday 5.4.26

The story of Easter goes back a long way. It brings to light some very primal or atavistic hopes and fears, going all the way back to Adam and Eve. One theory of why the Neanderthals died out and we survived is that, though physically stronger, the Neanderthals never really learned the art of co-operation and mutual aid. I've culled this from an article on being lucky, being fortunate, as more than "mere accident". The article sticks largely to scientific language and argues that lucky people are lucky because

"they are paying attention to the right things and the author goes on to say – " their own things.... I sometimes describe this as following your "fascination compass". The topic that makes you lose track of time, the activity you do without payment – these are not idle preferences. They are neurological signals pointing towards the cognitive state in which good fortune is most likely to find you" (Nobuko Nokano Guardian Review 28.3.26 p57)

And more than this – luck favours not only the curious and those who persevere in paying attention to their own things but those who allow the reward system – the dopamine hit – in all of this to encompass care for others to the point where the reward itself becomes secondary. Those who

"Help because you actually care and it amplifies. Lucky people understand this distinction instinctively. They give freely and, in doing so, build the kind of social capital that opens doors they did not know even existed."

For a monk experiencing all the primal feelings that the journey to Easter brings this is all extremely suggestive. Until the sight of Jesus after the resurrection and the experience of the Holy Spirit the disciples are largely living the life of unlucky people – they fail to understand, they fail to cash in their natural aptitude for good fortune, that is for that capacity to care for others, for love that takes them out of their cares and worries about themselves. They fail to see the empty tomb as a sign of their own good fortune. The Beloved Disciple gets there first, both literally and metaphorically, because his curiosity and perseverance in the face of difficulty are motivated by love, his love for Christ and Christ's love for him. He sees more clearly because his concern is not solely for himself and his own misfortune. He gives himself freely to a larger truth which survives death. In this sense love is its own reward and there's no need, no desire to count the cost.

Peter's impetuosity is a sign that he too is on that path - but he hasn't quite got there yet and nor have I, a sign of our Neanderthal genes perhaps but let it be as luck, as love, would have it – the luck or love that opens doors we may not even know existed.

We might say that it's God love that opened the tomb.

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