

We are marking Earth Day. But given the ecological devastation in our world today, it is a little tough to know what to say that has any good news. But it is the season of Easter, and the text most common for the week after Easter is the one we just heard.

It takes place on a day shadowed by the cross, a day shadowed by the power of death. The disciples had locked themselves away and were in hiding out of fear. And they had good reason to be afraid! It was still the Passover Festival in Jerusalem, and the city was still flooded with Roman soldiers, the soldiers who had executed Jesus just days before. And add to that, the city was still swollen with crowds, the crowds that had turned against Jesus just days before. Things already looked terrible and seemed as if nothing could stop them from getting worse.

It was on that day, when death seemed to have been at the height of its power, it was on that day when Jesus appeared to the disciples. There he was standing among them, still bearing the marks of the cross, still bearing the signs of death doing its worst, but he was alive again. Jesus told them, just the same way God had sent him to the world, now he was sending them to the world. They were to proclaim the good news of Jesus' resurrection to the whole world. Jesus was not the last of those who would be raised from the dead—he was just the first. Jesus was the firstborn of the dead, and from then on and forevermore, every person, every living thing, every corner of all creation, it was all redeemed from the power of death. Death was no more the greatest power of all, but life, life abundant, life resplendent and triumphant, life eternal was the destiny of the whole world. Jesus sent them to the world, charged them with spreading that good news

and living like it were true that Death was dead. They heard this good news and they were changed forever.

All except Thomas. Thomas, you see, had not happened to be there. And when the disciples told Thomas they had seen Jesus alive, when the Disciples told Thomas what Jesus had asked them to do, Thomas wouldn't believe them. He said "unless I see the nail marks on his hand, and put my finger in the mark of the nails, I will not believe. Because he lacked certainty, the certainty of seeing it with his own eyes, of putting his finger in it, Thomas would not believe that life had triumphed,

And so, Thomas would not be joining them in doing what Jesus told them to do, either. Thomas would not believe in the resurrection and so he certainly would not go proclaim the resurrection to the world. Thomas lacked certainty in the resurrection, and so he certainly would not live like it were

true that death was dead. Thomas lacked certainty, so he would not be transformed. Thomas lacked certainty, so he would not do his part in the redeeming of creation.

“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe” Jesus says to Thomas.

In his own way, Thomas shows what faith is. Faith is when I lack certainty, but still allow myself to be transformed by the good news of Jesus’ resurrection. Faith is when I lack certainty, but still live my life like it were true that death is dead. Faith is when I lack certainty, but still do my part for the redeeming of creation.

That is the work of Easter. That is what it means to be an Easter people, a resurrection people. It is about living life in such a way that the resurrection changes from a story someone has told me, to a way of life that transforms

me and transforms the world. That is the work of Easter, to live like I really believe life has the last word.

We are marking Earth Day. And our world, God's good creation, Earth Day takes place on a day that is shadowed by the cross, shadowed by the power of death. Ecological devastation reigns supreme and we have good reason to be afraid. Extreme weather blurring the line between natural and man-made disaster, the collapse of insect population threatening a wholesale unraveling of the food chain and mass extinction, atmospheric carbon skyrocketing and humanity notching the single highest carbon emission year of all time. Things look terrible and it seems nothing can stop them from getting worse.

But even so! But even so we are an Easter people. The work of Easter is to live like we really believe that life will have the last word.

Do we have certainty about that? Where is the evidence, the certain evidence that ecological devastation will be reversed? Can we lay our hands on that evidence? See it with our own eyes? Put our fingers in it? No. We do not have that certainty, and as people of faith we should not be waiting for certainty anyway. Faith is when we lack certainty, but still allow ourselves to be transformed, faith is when we lack certainty but still do our part for the redemption of creation, faith is when resurrection changes from a story someone has told us, to a way of life that transforms us and transforms the world.

And I've got some good news for you, in working to save God's good earth, we're not in this alone . The world is full of people of faith, doing their part. They might not all believe in God, but the world is full of people living out

resurrection faith, believing in the resurrection of the earth from ecological devastation.

I know of many individuals—Rebecca Bowler and Martha Schick and Helen McCrady just to name a few who have totally reorganized their day to day lives to reduce their use of plastics and their carbon footprint. Brad Swing is working with the city on micro grids to make our electrical infrastructure ready for a renewable energy future.

Then there is this congregation—led by Mary Ann Lape, Carol Boggs, Ted Wade, Neil Miller, Katherine Schofield, and Bev Hanna, we have just completed the work necessary to be certified as a level one Green Congregation as recognized by the United Church of Christ—meaning we have take real and concrete steps to improve our ecological impact on the earth.

Or just look at The Sunrise movement—it is a movement for collective action on climate change, led by young people, that is shifting the political conversation about climate change. Through direct action and strategic policy initiatives, they've already had an impact, and their meetings keep outgrowing whatever space they have.

Then there are Scientists at MIT are working on major engineering advancements to reduce carbon emissions. One lab is working to create one atom thick polymers, working on a nano scale this would separate crude oil into its constituent parts, by pumping it through this polymer like a filter. Rather than worldwide networks of oil refineries belching smoke as they boil crude oil 24 hours a day, this technology would make refining oil a non-carbon generating activity. Another lab is working on refining steel using molten oxide electrolysis, instead of heat. Rather than steel mills around



the globe burning tremendously hot fires 24 hours a day to melt iron, instead there would be just the hum of electricity. These technologies could make steel manufacturing and the refining of oil non carbon producing activities. What would that really matter though, you wonder? That would reduce global carbon emissions by 25%. Just those two things. Do they know for certain that they will work? No, of course not. There are dozens of labs in MIT working on different climate solutions and none of them are certain. Does the Old South green team, or the individuals reducing their carbon footprint, or the Sunrise movement, do any of them know for certain that their actions will be what makes the difference in the earth's future? No, of course not. That is not what faith is about, that is not what movements are about.

As Easter people, we must not allow certainty of success to be the bar for transforming our lives and transforming the world. As people of faith we have to live as if death is no longer the greatest power of all, but life, life abundant, life resplendent and triumphant, life eternal. As people of faith, we must do our part to make resurrection more than a story someone has told us, but a way of life that transforms us and transforms the world. We are not alone.