

EASTER SUNDAY
April 15, 2007
Fr. Alan Sutherland

The last couple of weeks there has been a commercial that ran both on TV and the radio. It told us to get excited- its opening day.

The commercial was for Keeneland and the opening day was this past Friday. Folks got excited and it was opening day. The spring meet has begun and it is off and running.

But it seems that Keeneland's commercial did not know that it was setting us up for a new opening day and a reason to get excited about Kentucky basketball. Billy Gillispie, amidst the carnival atmosphere, ushered in a new era; a new excitement to Kentucky basketball. It certainly was a day to get excited and because of live coverage on TV and radio it certainly was a memorable opening day.

A lot happened on Friday that got folks excited.

Amidst all of the new openings and the new excitement we gathered as a community of faith, as all Christian communities around the world to remember that it was also Good Friday.

For all of God's children this was the real opening day of a 3 day event that ushered in something eternal for all of God's children. We call it Good Friday because, as horrible as crucifixion was, the reason for Jesus being crucified is something that we as God's children ought to get really excited about.

After Jesus was dead, His body was buried by Joseph of Arimathea in a tomb that was sealed by large stone and then guarded by soldiers.

But Friday was opening day for God. Jesus died but Jesus of Nazareth could not be kept in that tomb by a stone. He could not be kept in a tomb that was guarded by soldiers.

And Friday was the beginning of God's new opening day to tell us that God can never be bound by a stone. God can never be bound by human beings.

God can never be bound by fear.

And because of our powerful God who cannot be bound- Jesus, who died on Friday, is no longer dead. He is risen. When God brought Jesus back to life from death God spoke to his people in the most powerful way that he knew.

He spoke to his people in love. It was not just the love that God had towards Jesus but it was the love that God has for all of his children.

You and me.

On Friday God said this is the opening day of a 3 day event that for eternity will make my kingdom visible on earth as it is in heaven. It is the opening day of a 3 day event to show that my kingdom will be a kingdom that is built not on the power of people. Not on a set of rules and regulations, not on burdening people with that which they cannot do, not on the power of fear or guilt. No, my kingdom will be built on the power of love.

In my kingdom, because of love, those who have been cast down will be raised up

In my kingdom, because of love, those who have been made to feel unacceptable will be welcomed.

In my kingdom, because of love, that which you thought was unforgivable will be forgiven.

In my kingdom, because of love, that in you which is deeply wounded can now be healed.

In my kingdom, because of love, that which is broken in you can now be made whole.

In my kingdom, because of love, death is not to be feared as the end but welcomed as new beginning.

In my kingdom, because of love, you will see these things at work and more because of love.

The people of the resurrection community will be alleluia people that endeavor to live a life that is hallmarked by love.

And the power that God used to bring Jesus back from death to life is

the same power that he gives to each one of us to live a life of love.

It is the power of love.

And the kingdom that Jesus taught us of, told us of, showed us, the kingdom that he died and rose for, is kingdom that is being built on nothing less than love.

And nothing, nothing, not even death can overcome this power.

Nothing.

The meet at Keeneland will be over in few weeks. Billy Gillespie, and we wish him all the best, will settle in and many seasons will come and go under his leadership.

But the kingdom of God, because of the real opening day of a glorious 3 day event, will last for ever. For all of God's children.

For those who have a good memory you will know that this is the same sermon I preached last week. Resurrection is not one day. It is the same this week as it was last week. The message is not just for one particular day. It is for changing one's life and asking us for a lifetime of living.

Good Friday was the beginning of a three day event that changed life, not just one day, but for eternity.

Because even today, just as last week, and just as tomorrow and all days we still proclaim Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed! Alleluia. Alleluia.

Amen