

Welcome of the **Feast of the Hollow Chocolate Bunny Who Lays, Hollow Chocolate Eggs!** This is an important annual feast, during which the Hollow Chocolate Bunny lays a trail of solid chocolate eggs all over our gardens, displaying his sadistic streak to spike our blood sugar levels. During the Feast of the Hollow Chocolate Bunny who Lays Solid Chocolate Eggs, the Hollow Chocolate Bunny **insists** that all the older people in the group, mostly grandparents, stoop down and offer one arthritic fingers to the youngest and smallest child participating in the feast, and in that stooped position, walk around the garden looking for solid chocolate eggs laid by the Hollow Chocolate Bunny, wrapped in shiny, colourful foil!

The Hollow Chocolate Bunny is far more cunning than he is sadistic. Not only has he fooled the under-15s into believing **he (?)** is capable of laying solid chocolate eggs, but sometime during the month preceding, he hopped along to a secret meeting with his financial advisors, to liquidate all his holdings of stocks and shares in oil companies, and corner the market, buying all the shares he could in pharmaceutical companies, especially those contracted to manufacture Paracetamol! You see, the Hollow Chocolate Bunny had insider information, that on Easter Monday, and every day thereafter for 15 days, the old folk who stooped to offer their arthritic finger to the youngest, will be consuming copious quantities of Paracetamol, to ease lower back pain! - two tablets/caplets/capsules, 3 even 4 times a day!

You might be surprised, I have a secret desire to see the Hollow Chocolate Bunny detained at Her Majesty's great pleasure for his financial misconduct, and for making sure I maintain my figure, but it may surprise you even more, there is world of people out there, who will believe you, if you told them, this was indeed, the Feast of the Hollow Chocolate Bunny, a feast to honour Saint Bunny, not to be confused with the Bunnies from the Playboy Club, no matter how sweet they are!

Over the years, I have heard many an extrapolation of the Easter narrative, but not as many as there are of the Christmas narrative. My favourite extrapolation of the latter is of the little boy who come home on the Sunday after Christmas and shows his parents what he had learned that day. His parents were bemused and befuddled when he produced a drawing of an aeroplane. *This is Christmas?* asked his father, rather puzzled. *Yes Daddy,* said the little boy, *its the flight to Egypt!* His father played along, but sought further clarification. *Oh I see! Well, I can see Joseph and Mary and Baby Jesus looking out the window, but who is the fourth person at the front of the aeroplane?* *Oh Daddy,* said the little boy, exasperated with the interrogation, *that's Pontus the Pilate!*

It is indeed a blessing to have a fertile mind which hatches possibilities and offers fresh exposure to trivia, and it works well in stand up comedy, but there is a real danger in extrapolating stories.

Humour aside, there are two possible reasons why we extrapolate Christmas and Easter narratives, both of which are connected.

First, miracles by their very nature, stir in us, either a sense of reverential awe, or suspicion which eventually leads to disbelief. When we **WANT** the incident/miracle to make sense and it doesn't, we readily accept explanations which appeal to our sense of logic, to satisfy our suspicions and doubts.

It is a childlike mind that is more accepting of miracles without question. Which links to the second reason why we readily accept and believe in extrapolated stories.

Second, we make the mistake of approaching miracles from a human perspective, not God's. As we just noted, the human mind wants to make sense of what it hears and sees and feels, and it prides itself in being rational and logical. If it cannot do this, the mind's natural tendency is to

be suspicious, and when enough fuel is added to suspicions, to then disbelieve.

When ever God acts, what ever God does, is a miracle; ONLY God can do what He does. Miracles are the natural actions of God.

If we believe in God, we believe He is **omnipresent** (able to be everywhere at the same time), **omnipotent** (all-powerful, who is not subject to physical limitations, God can do what He wants), **omniscient** (all-knowing, aware of the past, present, and future, nothing takes him by surprise, because He knows all that can be known).

If God can be everywhere at the same time, able to do anything without physical limitations, and knows all that can ever be known (*not* all there is to know!), then we must humbly accept, there are things God does, we do not understand. We are presented with a choice: either we accept God's actions and accept them as miracles, or in rejecting the miracle, we also reject God!

The Easter narrative is full of miracles. From our point-of-view, as we heard on Friday morning, the human body cannot withstand the cruel torture that was crucifixion. Early on the first day of the week, Sunday morning to us, in the semidarkness before daybreak, Mary Magdalen and a group of women go to the tomb, to finish what was not done on Friday, which was to clean and embalm the body of Jesus.

Both gospel writers Luke and John tell us, they "*found/discovered to their shock-horror, the stone which covered the entrance to the tomb and was sealed, rolled away.*"

Angels inform the startled group of ladies, *Why do you look for the living among the dead?*, in other words, *Why have you come to a burial place, looking for someone who is alive?* The group of startled ladies hastily return to the disciples to declare, *He is risen!*

Where do the extrapolated stories of Easter come from?

The Gospel writer Matthew, offers us a disturbing detail in the resurrection narrative, which helps us discover the source of extrapolated stories. He writes, *As the women were making their way back to the Disciples, the elite guards who had been tasked by Pontus Pilate to guard the tomb with their lives, frightened what might happen to them, ran and reported to the chief priests (not Pontus Pilate) everything that had happened ... who paid them large sums of money to spin the story that Jesus' disciples came in the dead of night and stole His body, while they were sleeping.*

The obvious question is, "Did the elite guards know, if they admitted to sleeping whilst on duty, their fate was death?" But having taken large sums of money, they would have disappeared into distant places, but not before giving fuel to the fact, Angels were dispatched from Heaven to roll away the stone which "sealed" tomb, in order to let Jesus out! From a human point of view, this makes perfect sense.

But from God's point of view, the Angels dispatched from Heaven, rolled the stone away, to show the first visitors, a group of women, *"See! He is risen! He is no longer dead, He is alive - He has broken the chains of death and He is alive!"*

The resurrection of the Christ defies all human logic and intelligence, but if you take God's perspective, then God, who is the Author of Life, will not allow anyone who basks in His love, to be surrendered to death.

This Easter morning, will you cast aside any extrapolated stories which might be entertaining, but distort the truth about the resurrection of Christ, and accept God's act of love, that His Son came to conquer death, that we might live in eternity, for eternity, in the presence of God?

That incident at the tomb, took place at the start of the day. At the close of the day two disciples were returning home, talking between themselves about the events of the crucifixion of Jesus and the

resurrection of the Christ. They were earnest in their keen desire to make sense of the events, but they teach us a lesson. Discussing matters of life outside of the Word of God, nothing will make sense, because we are looking at these events from a human point of view, without the advantage of the framework of God's point of view.

Only when Jesus comes alongside and journeys with them, *explaining to them what was said in the Scriptures concerning Himself*, do they begin to first appreciate then understand the events from God's perspective.

The foundation of encountering Jesus the Christ, is Scripture. So when the two disciples, in their genuine love for the person who journeyed with them, invite Him to have supper with them, *at the table ... He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began serving them*. That's when their eyes were opened and they recognised Jesus the Christ! These two disciples were not at the last supper in the upper room, but they recognised the Christ in broken bread.

Easter is a good time to cast aside the extrapolated stories of Hollow Chocolate Bunnies who lay solid chocolate eggs in colourful foil wrappings, and enter God's Word, because that's where it makes sense. Don't make the mistake of reading God's Word to locate a verse or story to back up your own plans and understanding; instead, read Scripture with earnestness, asking God first, to reveal Himself so that you can worship Him, then ask Him to speak directly into your situation, and He will!

Like the women who saw for themselves, the empty tomb and believed the miracle of God, go and open God's Word and discover for yourself, the empty tomb. Then, before declaring to the world, *He is Risen!*, bow down in worship of God who made Christ's resurrection possible.

This is a good time to make a fresh commitment to Jesus our Christ. Let's make this commitment together ... *(prayer)* **AMEN.**