

Homily for the Funeral of David Teal

'But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you?'

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Things are not always what they seem, or so a physicist would say.

The world is not made of 'solid stuff' as it would seem, but of unsearchable numbers of packets of energy that are both particle and wave simultaneously.

Time is not the same everywhere, as one might think. Rather, time goes faster the farther one is from a large body, like a planet, and slower the closer one gets to it. Though only in the smallest detectable degree, it is true that a clock on the floor ticks slower than a clock you are holding in your hands, since the one in your hands is just a little farther from the surface of the earth.

A thing can be in two places at once, contrary to what we generally seem to observe. But actually, subatomic particles are in two places at once all the time, and often even interact with themselves. This can be demonstrated with little more than a dim light and a piece of cardboard with two slits cut into it.

Things are not always what they seem. For the truth is not always so obvious.

But a physicist seeks after the truth of things. Something mysterious, and beautiful.

Such, it would seem, goes for Jesus.

A child born in the backwaters of a great empire of a teenage mother to a poor father, He grew up as any normal child should, learned things as any normal

child would, and studied in the Temple and the synagogues as a pious Jew must.

He became an adult, and then, it would seem, after being washed in a river by His cousin John, He decided to start preaching to people about *the kingdom of God and His righteousness*. He taught that one ought *not be anxious, as the gentiles*, but to have faith solely in the Father, who *clothes the grass of the field, and will finely clothe man*. He taught that the Father loved every individual human, for man is the pinnacle of the creation that He first created in love.

This man Jesus wandered about all Judea and Galilee, preaching such things. The people were often impressed with Him, often confused by Him, often scared of Him, for this man Jesus was a strange man, or so it seemed.

At first many followed him, to hear His every word and receive His blessings. At first many, then some, then few, then none, for He became too strange, or so it seemed.

Men who have become too strange are dangerous, or so people thought, and so this Jesus was arrested, beaten, flogged, tortured, mutilated, and ultimately crucified, for He claimed the one thing too strange to be accepted in polite society. He claimed to be God.

Then He was buried. And then, a few days later, someone lost the body. Or so it seemed.

But a physicist would remind us, things are not always as they seem. There is a certain physicist we are all familiar with who would say what I have just said before is all wrong, and He would go on to confess the truth of what may not be entirely obvious.

The truth is that a baby was not merely born to Mary, but the divine *word*, God Almighty, *was made flesh*. He did not merely get older, but *grew in wisdom and stature*. He did not study in the Temple, but as God filled it once again with His divine presence. He was not just washed in the river Jordan by John, but was anointed by the prophet and publicly declared to be the Christ, the very Messiah.

The Christ did not merely wander around preaching. Rather God by His words was exorcizing the world of all the lies of Satan. The masses did not abandon Him, but rather He left the masses, to fulfill His Father's will, something that only He can do, and must do alone.

The Son of God was not merely tortured and punished, but rather He was gathering the sufferings of all the world into Himself. He was not simply crucified and killed, but rather He offered Himself upon a new altar, that all the world might be purified, and all things consecrated to Himself.

He was not merely buried, but descended into Hell to destroy the devil, and all of his works, and all of his ways. And His body did not just disappear. Rather He rose from the dead, having defeated death and brought to human nature eternal life, for it is written, *the last enemy to be destroyed is death.*

These things Christ did, for He is the Son of God, who *sought after righteousness.* Something mysterious, and beautiful.

Things are not always as they seem.

A body lies before us all. A dead body. When we think of this body, we think many things. We remember a David Teal who always had a question to ask, and never one that required a short answer. We remember a man who never missed a typo on a Sunday bulletin. We recall a crooked finger, once bent as a great sportsman heroically attempted to catch a speeding baseball. Some of us remember 'Super Dave.'

He seemed to us to be all these things, but before the eyes of God, he is a saint, a holy one sanctified and forever united to the Lord, a beloved possession, and a true son. This he was, and is, and forever shall remain.

Yet a dead body remains before us, or so it seems. The truth is not always so obvious. Perhaps it is not dead, but only sleeping. Perhaps it is not sleeping, but only waiting. Waiting for something mysterious and beautiful.

I speak of the Resurrection of the Flesh, the ultimate promise given to this body and all the baptized, the guarantee of everlasting life, and final victory, that we shall indeed be *clothed by the Father more greatly.*

The sleeping saints, even the one we now surround, wait in hope, a sure hope, a hope as true as God Himself. For it is written:

'Yet after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God.'

[Mysterious, and beautiful.]

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Preached by Pastor Fields

Sermon texts: Psalm 139; Job 19:21-27; 1 Corinthians 15:21-26; Matthew 6:25-33.

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