



**April 2020**

### **The day after Easter**

Easter has come and gone, and we continue in the limbo of uncertainty, unease and disease generated by COVID-19. Natural questions are: For people tired of isolating quarantines or crammed together unable to distance physically, people sick of “zooming” or broken by loneliness, people burdened by extra work or suffering the lack of employment, is there any invitation in the ancient story of a man who, on a donkey’s back, enters a city lashed by imperial taxes and armies while people clamor around him? Of a manual worker vociferously condemned to death by the very people who days before had proclaimed him their liberator? Of a teacher abandoned by his friends in his most crucial hour to be killed as the worst criminal in order to demonstrate the fate of anyone who dared shake the tenuous *Pax Romana*? Of one who, days after being buried, appears full-bodied to a woman in the cemetery garden and then to all the disciples?

I dare say there is. That old narrative of anticipation and expectation, of disillusionment and fear, of evil intrigue and death is also a narrative of liberation and life that challenges us today. That story of God’s intervention in human history has unavoidable repercussions for us, if we dare enter into it rather than remaining distant as sheer spectators. Because the same Community-of-Love, central protagonist, wants to heal us today from our misplaced expectations, disillusionments and fears, to unveil evil intrigues, and to deal once and for all with death in all its expressions.

Although humanity is all too responsible for the spread of the coronavirus, having inappropriately crossed boundaries in the created order and invaded the animal realm, having recklessly continued traveling, and flaunting personal freedoms rather than refraining in solidarity towards the vulnerable, God has not abandoned us. God is showing up with every health worker who is daily jeopardizing her own health in order to care for the sick and dying. God is avidly receptive to every prayer uttered in favor of others. God is suffering with every untimely death as much as the Father suffered the death of Jesus on the cross. God is present in every personal realization of our incapacity to save ourselves. God smiles at our dawning acknowledgment that every step back on the part of human animals is allowing a step forward for the rest of creation. The Community-of-Love yearns to make all things new even in our day, extending the reconciliatory and life-giving work of the dead and risen Christ to the entire cosmos. The question that remains today is: Will we step out of our limiting imaginations enough to recognize God's presence in our midst as did Mary in the garden? Or will we remain locked into our limited perspectives and, like the disciples with the women who returned from the empty grave, dismiss the witness of those who step out boldly, believing in the power of the resurrection?

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**FOCUS: Casa Adobe, our learning community**



*It's not all work in Casa Adobe. Sunny days and Catan keep moods cheery!*

For privileged people today, quarantine means long days of time alone or with a

couple family members. For us, at Casa Adobe, it means full days with another 14-18 people, depending on if our next-door neighbors join for dinner. The tough side is that several members of our community have lost their livelihoods and are needing to re-invent themselves into new means to sustain their economy. The bright side is that we have a chunk of land and there is always space for another vegetable bed that can yield food for the community. Also, Costa Rica, a country that has no army and instead invests in health and education, has been quick to call on acts of responsible citizenship on the one hand (isolation, restricted circulation of vehicles, and so on) as well as to respond with subsidies for families affected by the stand-still, and full testing and health care for anyone affected by coronavirus, regardless of their race, age, migratory or social-economic status.

We are personally grateful because a few weeks ago, when we were showing troubling symptoms, we were immediately tested by very efficient medical staff. The gratitude is double because we tested negative and were able to step out of our seclusion and join the rest of our community in morning prayer, meals, Sunday services, Easter liturgies, movie nights and other community gatherings.

We are grateful for:

- A solid health and social system in Costa Rica.
- Two young Cohort members who are serving as they can even in days of COVID-19.
- Land and seeds, water and sun, avid gardeners and fresh vegetables.
- Healthy relationships within our community even in the midst of quarantine.
- The possibility some of us have to continue working remotely and to continue teaching and serving.
- The ability to connect virtually with our kids who are in 6 different cities in 5 different countries while we're in yet another one.

Thanks for walking with us in prayer, giving and learning!

We need your prayers for:

- Those of Casa Adobe who need to find new jobs because theirs have fizzled with the virus.

- The elderly and other vulnerable people in our Santa Rosa neighborhood.
- Creative capacity for us all to continue serving even with the current restrictions.
- Permanent housing for our daughter Maya and her baby Syiharra in Boston.
- Ruth's dad, René Padilla, whose health is still fragile. That the lock-down keep him safe although it is hard to not receive any visitors.

With gratitude,

*Jim and Ruth Padilla DeBorst*

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who are faithfully and generously giving!**

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able to support our ministry?**

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