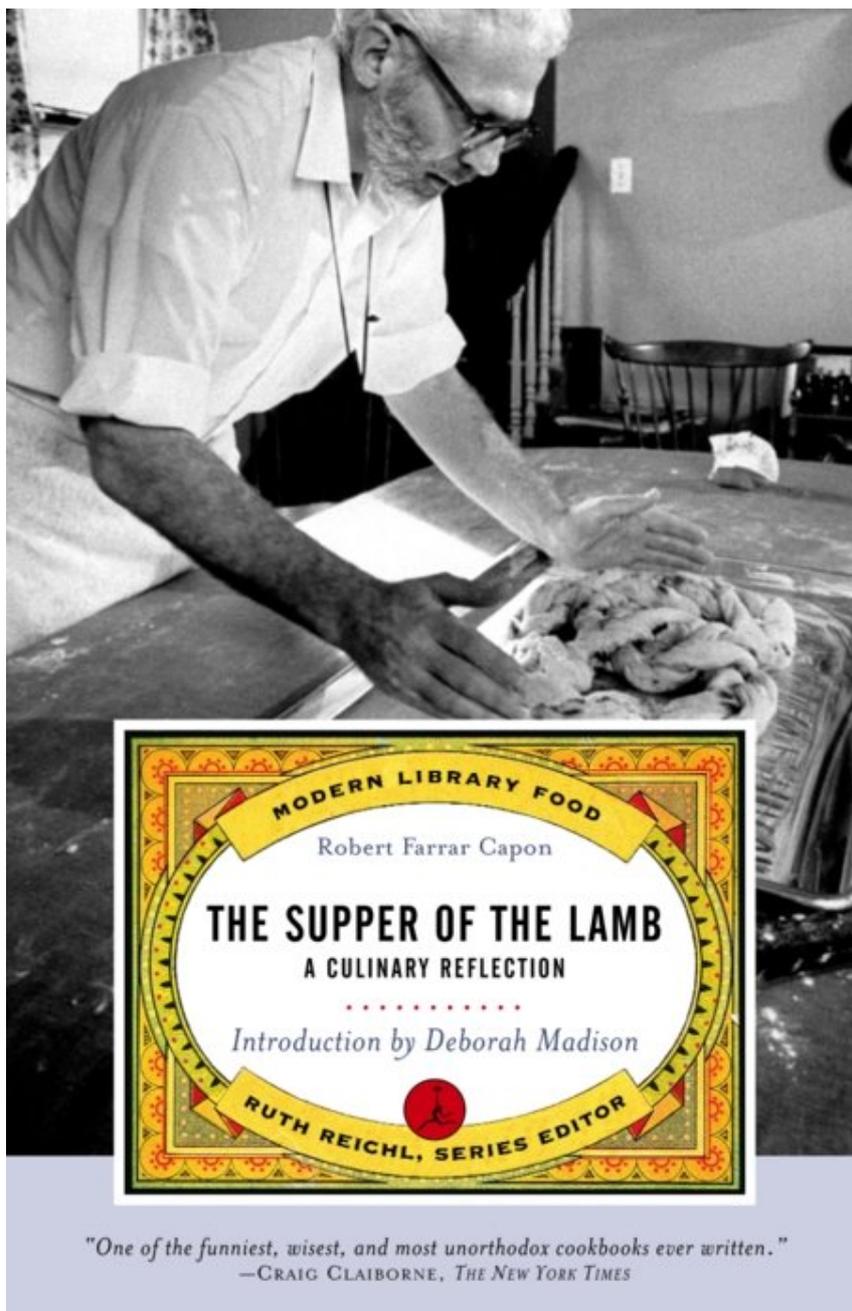


The Good News of God

'See, I am making all things new'

Year B 2018 Pentecost 15¹



¹ Song of Solomon 2.11-12a

I love spring.

I love the sound of birdsong in the morning. I love the warbling song of the magpie in the front garden. The squark of the seagull by the sea. The coo of the pigeon in the city.

I love spring.

I love the blossom of the magnolia tree. I love the sight of the flowering gum. I love the smell of jasmine, and roses.

I love spring.

We are not quite there yet, but I love the warmer air. I love the sound of bees. I love the sight of the butterfly.

But most of all, what I love about spring, is the feeling that I get, in my bones, my own quiet valley of dry bones, of that new life that is now inside me. The new life of my baptism. That is my part in the new life of the world, that has now come into the world, in Jesus Christ.

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Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away;

for now the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone.
The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of singing has come.
The fig tree puts forth its figs,
and the vines are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance.
Arise, my love, my fair one,
And come away.

~

In baptism we come out of darkness, into marvellous light. Out of the darkness of this old world, in its striving for political sovereignty, against God, into the marvellous light of a new world. Of a new creation. The springtime of a new creation.

‘If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!’

With these words of the Apostle Paul, we baptize, here at Saint Peter’s, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Words that are printed the baptism certificate of this parish.

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The Apostle Paul goes on:

‘All this is from God. Who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation...So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us, we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God!’

In baptism we are reconciled to God, born again, made new.

~

In the northern hemisphere, no sooner is Jesus’ Passion for the reconciliation of the world, and his resurrection for the glorification of humanity, proclaimed, throughout Holy Week and Easter – it is spring. The once for all event of God in Jesus Christ, his incarnation, his Passion, his resurrection, his ascension, that nature itself, claps its hands.

The promise of the prophet Isaiah, concerning the coming Christ, is fulfilled:

‘For you will go out in joy,
and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
shall burst into song,
and all the trees of the field shall sing for joy.’

The consummation of creation, Jesus Christ, is one with God. The earth itself opens its heart. The earth lifts its voice. Bursts into new life. In acclamation, at the good news of Jesus Christ. The Son of God. In whom God is making all things new.

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‘Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying:

‘See the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

They will be his peoples,

And God himself will be with them;

He will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

Mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

For the first things have passed away.

And the One who was seated on the throne said,

‘See, I am making all things new.’

To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.’

In baptism, God in Christ is making all things new.

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But baptismal is not all beer and skittles. As we must first die to ourselves, before we can live a new life before God. A dying to self, a rising to new life, that is 'there all our lives'. Not just with our water baptism. But our baptism by the Holy Spirit. We are baptised, in water, and in Spirit.

~

In the southern hemisphere, no sooner it seems do we make our annual celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Passover of God, than all things descend into winter. The season by which we are taught the very difficult lesson, the often painful lesson, the sometimes lonely lesson, of the baptismal life. That before we can live to God, we must first die to our self. We must first die to the arrogance, of striving for sovereignty over and against God, within us. Within our own heart. This is no easy matter. It *is* hard to be humble.

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On the Road to Emmaus, the risen Lord reminded his confused first band of disciples, of the nature of Christianity. That to proclaim his resurrection, we must proclaim his crucifixion. 'Oh how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer, and then enter into his glory?' There is no resurrection, apart from the

crucifixion. There is no new life, without dying to self. There is no springtime, without the winter time.

~

True for the individual. This is true for the world.

‘I consider that the sufferings of the present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed.’ Paul says in Romans 8.

The world is passing away. In Christ there is a new creation.

~

‘If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!’

It is true. I feel it in my bones. Not least at this time of year, with the first signs of the daffodils, standing up, in the garden of Saint Peter’s.

~

Says Robert Farrar Capon,

‘Come then; leap upon these mountains,
skip upon these hills and heights of earth.

The road to Heaven does not run *from* the world, but *through* it—

for the risen gorgeousness of the New Earth and for the glorious earthiness
of the True Jerusalem...

Between our love and His Priesthood,

He makes all things new.’