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Easter Sunday, 2007  
Our Lady, Queen of Peace

Living in on Eighth Street in the District right by the Brookland Metro Station (on the red line), we see a fair amount of trash that accumulates especially by the bridge next to our house. As a community project, my brothers and I decided to clean it all up this past Friday. This was a real Good Friday – bottles, needles, bags, 18 old tires, etc. There were 15 of us.

At first, I thought this would take a few minutes -- but it took three hours – how appropriate of Good Friday. Armed with brooms and rakes, we soon realized that all we really needed were two hands and one another!

We were busy working...and complaining – and all of a sudden – Marc Gherardi, the leader of the project, went rolling down a steep hill—kinda like the way I think the rock was rolled away from the tomb. He went down that hill with some speed, rolling as his 200+ pound body gained momentum with each yard that he rolled and mangling his new eyeglasses. Thankfully, he was all right, but the gratitude, the relief, and the laughter shifted our focus a bit. Instead of complaining about the people who caused all this trash, the city who never finished the job of taking away the tree parts they cut down, the drug traffickers who left their coke bags behind, the graffiti artists who threw their spray paint cans, and most of all the neighbors who weren't joining us or thanking us, we saw better when Marc lost his glasses. With perfect glasses he was able to see the mess and all the filth. With perfect eyesight we sometimes get negative, seeing only the problems that are before us.

When stones are rolled away in our lives – we may feel on shaky ground – we may not see clearly. BUT, these are the eyes of Easter, like those of the beloved disciple –  
eyes that need to focus a bit more,  
eyes that need to still wake up even though we are already out of bed,  
eyes that are watery with tears,  
eyes that are blinded by the sun –  
this is what Easter does to us:  
It knocks us over so that we can find our rightful place in the world.

Sometimes, we need to lose our footing in order to find our faith – isn't this Easter faith and Resurrection vision?

- If we already have all the answers – then Easter probably is unnecessary.
- If we already feel like life is just what it is and there's no use in changing, then Easter probably feels uninteresting.
- If we never rise above our own fears and anxieties, then Easter will not easily lift us up.

- If we always box people in to our pre-conceived notions and judgment, then Easter is a nuisance not a holiday.
- If we see life as business as usual, then Easter is boring to us, not a blessing for us.
- If we can't let ourselves go deeper in love or let ourselves be loved anew, then this Easter will as empty as the tomb.

But we are blessed with Easter Faith and its Resurrection Vision.

- We don't want all the answers because our lives have great questions that only God's mystery can enlighten.
- We do want to change—individually and socially, because we can rise above the debris of our neighborhoods, the pettiness that rips relationships apart, the wars of our nations, and the poverty of too many people.
- We do shake our fears and our anxieties when we reach out for help, letting the Simon's of Cyrenes and Veronicas help us carry our cross or refresh our weary face.
- We will set people free from our rigid judgments and ideas and let them be who they are.
- We work so that life won't be business as usual because there is nothing ordinary about God's extraordinary daily graces.
- And we will fall deeper in love and let ourselves be loved, for God's love is too good for us to turn away.

As Easter people, we are called not to turn away or run away from our tombs. Just to roll away the rocks that keep us from seeing what God sees:

The hope of new life,  
 The possibility of peace and reconciliation,  
 The joy of authentic love.

This is what the beloved disciple saw when he went into a dark cave. He didn't see an empty tomb; he saw his space filled with hope and promise and light. And then, he and his friends went out into their worlds to live lives of hope and promise and light. Let's join them because Jesus Christ is Risen.