

Scripture Reading: Luke 24:1-12

Christ has died. Christ is risen! Christ is coming again!
—Communion liturgy

A friend told me about an unusual Easter card available at Walmart, Target or supermarkets. It almost looks like a Christmas card because the upper half of the card features a nativity scene with a baby in a manger, surrounded by adoring shepherds. Mary sits by the manger, gazing upon the child, while Joseph hovers nearby. The wise men are in the distance, approaching the stable. But the shepherds take up most of the space, and it is the shepherds one notices first.

The lower half of the card features those same shepherds, 30 years later, standing before Jesus' empty tomb.

I wonder what they were thinking.

Perhaps they were thinking about the love of God.

Thirty years earlier, the birth at Bethlehem demonstrated God's love in a way that was creative, powerful and almost unthinkable! God became a human being! The Bible even makes an explicit link between the birth of Jesus and the vast love of God: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son ..." (John 3:16).

But as the shepherds stood before the empty tomb they also got a lesson in the love of God. The Bible very plainly links the Cross to God's love for us: "But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Ever wonder which revelation of God was greater news to tell? Was it the birth of God's love, or the triumph of God's love over sin, death and the devil?

It takes childlike trust in God's love and assurance to have faith in these two visions of love incarnate.

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Loving God, I praise you today for the empty tomb. Like the manger and the cross, the tomb is a reminder of your love for me. Praise to you and to your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.