

The Fall from the Top of the Stairs

Good Friday. March 25, 2016. Trinity Episcopal Church,
Alliance, Ohio. The Rev'd Jerome H. (Kip) Colegrove.

Bobbi Jo Bogold, nine months old, cute and sweet as she could be and the favorite baby sitting client of Julie Blake Fisher, my wife to be, then in her mid teens.

At the top of the stairs, heading for the ground floor with Bobbi Jo in her arms, Julie stumbles. In an instant she knows this is going to be bad. She curls all the way around Bobbi Jo and down the stairs they go, clunk, bang, whack, thud, all the way to the bottom.

Julie is beaten up some but not seriously damaged. At once she checks Bobbi Jo, whose eyes are open wide in astonishment, followed a second or two later by “Waaaaaaaaaah!”

Well, that's gratitude for you!

But seriously, Bobbi Jo was fine. Julie broke her fall completely. It would be years, if ever, before that little girl would understand just what was done for her.

We have fallen, you and I, into sin and death, all the way to the bottom. How long will it be, if ever, before we understand just what was done for us, just how Jesus curled around us and broke our fall?

Like a girl with a baby in her arms, beginning to fall, knowing what the stakes are, knowing what it might cost her—Julie could have been paralyzed or died, you know—God never hesitated. Because that's what God is like. He loves us. We don't have to be adorable little bundles of joy like Bobbi Jo Bogold. It's God's nature to love his creatures, even when we fall from the upper floor of his divine image all the way to the bottom level of sin and evil, where his image in us is bruised and broken.

So on Good Friday we remember how God in Jesus took the fall for us—with us, curled around us—broke our fall, took the bruises, took the slander, took up his cross and died on it.

Well, here we stand at the foot of the stairs.

Coming this Sunday, to a church near you: the story of how Jesus takes us all the way back *up* the stairs. All the way. No bruises left on us (the nail marks are in *his* hands). All the way up. His holy image in us restored. All the way back up the stairs to eternal life.

Resurrection.