In many ways this week is a week of whiplash. Not the kind that Gruber law firms can turn into fast cash but a more metaphorical version because all through Holy Week it seems that when are headed in one direction often that direction changes in an instant. What seems true one moment is not true the next. The crowds shout “Hosannah in the highest” right up to the moment that they begin to shout “crucify.” Peter vows to never deny Jesus and keeps this promise right up to the moment that he denies Jesus. Pilate finds nothing wrong with Jesus and then has him flogged and sent off to be crucified. The sports books in Las Vegas would have lost a lot of money this week. But none of these contestants in the great whiplash pageant comes close to the greatest of all whiplashes (if that is a word) which we have today -- the resurrection. Because it does not deal with something as pedestrian as people changing their minds, rather it involves changing one of the fundamental understandings of the world which is that dead people stay dead. No one is expecting the resurrection, including the disciples who were told in advance that it was going to happen. Jesus was killed on Friday and here he is on Sunday very much alive. Today’s whiplash is different than the others we have seen this week because it is not a sign of human frailty and sinfulness rather it concerns the healing of human frailty and sinfulness. Today fixes the problem that Jim Morrison identified when he sang “no one here gets out alive.” All of our sinfulness and frailty point towards one thing which is our ultimate destruction. The path we all follow ends in one place and that place is the tomb. But the events of today change all of that because the tomb is empty letting St. Paul say with confidence, “O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?” The ultimate enemy of life has been vanquished.

In the hyperbolic world in which we live phrases like “nothing would ever be the same” get thrown around like a midget at an Australian bowling alley. But today it is true, nothing would be the same after the Resurrection. The trajectory that Adam and Eve set us on after eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil has changed. Death is no longer the final word because Jesus has been raised bodily from the grave which tells us that the same can happen to us. If you have ever wondered why the Nicene Creed spends time explaining that Jesus was incarnate from the Virgin Mary it is because it is really important to know that Christ had the same kind of body as us. And since he was raised this means that human bodies can be raised and therefore, we can be raised. For as Gregory of Nazianzus put it, “What has not been assumed has not been healed.” If, Jesus did not rise bodily today it might be interesting but not life altering. However, that is not what happened. Today is the day which shows that Christ endured the worst that sin could muster and came out alive on the other side. The cycle that the 80’s band The Godfathers spelled out as birth, school, work, death is given one more layer and that is life after death. Our age-old enemy was destroyed today and we may be with God forever. In our bodies we may be raised with Christ.

You may wonder why I keep emphasizing the bodily resurrection let me try and explain. This past week we have been given a weird sort of reminder about the importance of the physical when the container ship Ever Given lodged itself in the Suez Canal. As of late it seems our society has seen what happens in cyberspace as being more important than what happens in the physical world. Similarly, the church can find itself emphasizing the spiritual to the elimination of the physical. But what the Ever Given grounding reminds us is that we can order all the Chinese sweat shop sourced stuff we want off of Amazon’s website but if the products are floating around the Red Sea because they can’t get through the Suez Canal it doesn’t matter a whole lot. The cyberworld needs the physical. Similarly, there is no spiritual without the physical. Today God announces that these bodies which contain all of who we are can be redeemed so that we may be God’s this day and forevermore.