

April 17, 2022 - Easter Sunday

Litany of Resurrection

P - God has come into our void,
C - Filling our hearts with love.
P - God has embraced our pain,
C - Filling our hearts with hope.
P - God has even entered our death,
C - Filling our hearts with life.
P - Christ is risen!
C - Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Prayers of the Day

God of mercy, we no longer look for Jesus among the dead, for he is alive and has become to Lord of life. Increase in our minds and hearts the risen life we share with Christ, and help us to grow as your people toward the fullness of eternal life with you, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Announcements

Gospel Reading - John 20:1-18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Sermon

Mary

A name

A common name

An ordinary name

For an ordinary person

Mary Magdalene
Simply means Mary of Magdala
A fishing village
On the Sea of Galilee
An ordinary place
For an ordinary person
To call home

One thing that makes Mary Magdalene interesting
Is that she is mentioned more in the four gospels
Than any other woman
Except for Jesus' mother
That *other* Mary
That *other* ordinary person
With the ordinary name

Mary of Magdala
That common person
Had been a companion of Jesus
Had traveled with him
Had supported him in his ministry

She had heard what he said
She had seen what he did
She was part of his entourage
As he wandered around
Teaching and healing
And pointing people to something
That was completely *not* ordinary
That was anything *but* common

She witnessed Jesus pointing to
The Reign of God
Which *came* in the ordinary
But *was not* ordinary
Which came in the *common*
But *was not* common
Which came *to* ordinary common people
Like Mary from the fishing village
And gave them hope
And inspired a sense of anticipation
Which turned their lives upside down
Making things *anything* but ordinary
Anything but common

Mary from the fishing village
Was also a witness to the end of the story
When it all came crashing down
When the power people
The religious leaders
And the Imperial bureaucrats
Conspired together
To put an end to it
By putting an end to Jesus
In that very public and horrendously painful way

Mary from the fishing village
Was there when they crucified him
She was there when he died
And according to some of the gospel writers
She was there when they buried him

And on the Sabbath they rested
According to the Commandment

And now
On the first day of the week
According to *all* the gospel writers
Mary from the fishing village
Went back to the tomb
Where all her hopes and dreams had been buried
And began again
To have her life turned upside down

The stone in front of the tomb
Had been moved
There was just a gaping hole in the earth
Which probably echoed the one in her heart
At that moment

So she ran back
And told Peter and another follower
What she had seen

Probably waking them from sleep to do it
Since it was still dark

And then she proceeded to run back with them to the tomb

The others went in to the hole
And saw what they saw
And wondered what they wondered

And were as confused as any of *us* would have been

And maybe still are...

These two others
Still puzzled mightily
But being of a more practical mind-set
Decided there was nothing to be done here

There was nothing *they* could do at this point
So they went home

But Mary from the fishing village
Lingered
Not knowing what to do
Yet being unable to leave

So
According to the writer of this account
She was alone again
With her tears

And then
Suddenly
Wasn't alone

Even more confusingly
There were people *in the tomb*
Asking her why she was crying

She answered as best she could
“They’ve taken my Lord away”

And again
Just as suddenly
There was someone *else* with her
Behind her as she leaned into that awful hole
And now *he* was asking her why she was crying

It doesn't take much imagination
To picture out what happened next

All of her confusion and fear
And pent-up emotion
Came pouring out in a bewildered babble

“My Lord my teacher my healer my friend the one who gave us hope who gave us purpose who pointed us who showed us who demonstrated the Reign of God and our leaders and our priests and the crowds and the empire and the soldiers and the cross and the nails and the spear and now the tomb is empty *please bring him back to me!*”

And into this torrent of words and feelings
And emotions and tears
And overwhelming grief
This newcomer says
One word

An ordinary word
A common word
A name

Her name

“Mary”

We don't know if he spoke it gently
To calm her down
Or barked it out
To break through the barrage of words

But however he said it
It got her attention

And she stopped

And she looked

And once again
Had her life turned upside down

If I am walking down the street
And you are walking *up* the street
And want to get my attention
You might accomplish your goal by saying, “Hey you”
I could stop if you yell out, “Hey mister!”
It's possible I would look your way if you call out “Yoo hoo!”

But I will guarantee
No matter how distracted I am
No matter how noisy it is
No matter how sleepy I might be
No matter what deep thoughts I might be thinking at the time
You *will* get my attention

If you call out
My name

And I'm going to guess
It's the same with you

Those few syllables of sound
No matter how common
No matter how ordinary
Our *names*
Are *who we are*
They are how we are identified
They are how we identify *ourselves*

So we will *always* pay attention
When someone says our name

Which is why baptism
Is so central
To our Easter celebration
As well as to our whole Christian life

Because it is *there*
That our name is spoken
By the one who raised Jesus from the dead
It is *there* that our identity
Is given
By the one who came out of that tomb
It is *there* that we are washed
By the cleansing Spirit of the one
Who comes out of the holes of our lives
Regardless of the confusion or pain
Regardless of the time or circumstance
Regardless of how distracted we are or what we have done

In baptism we are named
Elaine, Child of God
Bob, Child of God
Sandy, Child of God
Jean, Child of God
Deborah, Child of God
Linwood, Child of God
Gail, Child of God
David, Child of God
Joel, Child of God

Our lives have been turned upside down

Just like Mary from the fishing village
Because the one we thought was dead
Is alive
The one we thought was irrelevant
Is present
The one we thought was “up there”
Is with us
And calling our names
And turning *our* lives upside down

So we join Mary from the fishing village
And every other ordinary and common Christian
Throughout history
In proclaiming that we have seen the Lord
Who has called us
And who *continues* to call us
By our names

No matter how ordinary we are

Christ is risen
Christ is risen indeed
Alleluia!
Amen

Prayers of the People

Celebrating the new life we have received, we offer our prayers for our world, our neighbours, and ourselves.

[*Short pause*]

A - Living God, Jesus lives, and now we live. Jesus lives, and now creation lives. We praise you for this indescribable gift. God who leads us into life,

C - Hear our prayer.

A - Living God, in the resurrection of Jesus, you proclaim your intent for the universe; for you desire reconciliation, you desire restoration, you desire the mending of relationships. We praise you for this overwhelming proclamation. God who leads us into life,

C - Hear our prayer.

A - Living God, your new creation has begun in the empty tomb. Open our eyes to see resurrection happening around us; open our hearts to an awareness of where resurrection needs to be shared. We praise you for this profound opportunity. God who leads us into life,

C - Hear our prayer.

A - Living God, you call us by our names, just as you called Mary. You send your church to announce life, and the victory of love. Walk with us, that we may faithfully embody your living presence. We praise you for this powerful calling. God who leads us into life,

C - Hear our prayer.

A - Living God, you send your church to the poor and outcast, the warring and the oppressed, the sick and the dying. Use us to tend to all who are in need of your companionship, especially those we name before you.

[Long pause]

We praise you for your healing love. God who leads us into life,

C - Hear our prayer.

A - Living God, Jesus lives, and so do we. Inspire us to be more than happy; fill us with a joy that overflows into every part of our lives. We praise you for this indescribable gift. God who leads us into life,

C - Hear our prayer.

P - We offer these prayers, and the prayers we carry in our hearts, trusting in your abundant and ever-present mercy; through Jesus Christ our living Lord.