

## Moderator's Online Worship – Easter Sunday, April 12, 2020

### Sermon Transcript

#### **Reflection on Scripture in Word (Richard Bott):**

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 towards 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 round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' 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.

Blessed Easter.

I've got to say - this is one of the strangest Easters that I have experienced in my life.

I remember Easters when I was a kid - extended family coming to visit! My cousins and Aunt and Uncle coming from Sault Saint Marie, and my Great Aunt and Uncle coming from Thunder Bay, having an Easter egg hunt in the house with seven kids all searching through the house. I remember being a teenager, going to church for Easter morning celebrations and then coming home, my grandparents coming for Easter dinner. I remember as a new minister, deciding that not only was I going to be part of the congregation's Easter Sunrise Service at 6 a.m., I was also going to continue the tradition that I had of keeping vigil over Easter Saturday night. And I remember, therefore, not waking up in time for Easter Sunrise Service.

I remember being part of worship celebrations with our Anglican sibs and getting to hold the huge Paschal candle outside of the church, lighting the candle, entering the church and singing, "The Light of Christ. Thanks be to God!"

But now?

I'm in my condo.

I've been in my condo for about 3 weeks, not going any further than my balcony. I'm one of those people that has "underlying health conditions" that covid-19 could be a problem for, so I've been self-isolating to be really careful.

It feels really strange to not be with my Community of Faith in a physical kind of way. It feels really strange to know that I'm in my own Upper Room.

Waiting for... something.

In some ways this time of isolation has been helping me to understand, just a little bit more, of what it would have been like for Jesus' disciples, in those first days after the crucifixion. At that time the "inner circle" of disciples were gathered in their Upper Room, not being sure of what was going to happen next. Perhaps wondering, in their case, if the authorities were going to be banging on their door. (Not something we worry about here in the same way.)

And grieving. Grieving things that had changed so suddenly. Things didn't make sense. They were chaotic. Confused.

And yet into that moment, the women got up and pulled together the practical things, because there was something needed to be done. The women left that Upper Room and went to the tomb where Jesus' body had been placed. In doing so, they became the first evangelists of the resurrection of Jesus. Mary, from Magdala, was the first of Jesus' disciples, in this narrative, to meet the Risen Christ. She was the first person to tell that his rest of the disciples, "I have seen the Lord."

One of the things that is very interesting for me is that the Resurrection had happened while everyone was still in the Upper Room. Easter had come, and no one knew about it. No one knew about it - until they went out and met the Risen Christ.

We aren't in a place in time where we can go out, yet, and, still, Easter has happened. In fact, I believe Easter is happening. The resurrection isn't just an instance that happens two thousand plus years ago. The resurrection is a moment that exists from that time forward and that time backward - is in all places and all times. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is now.

The Resurrection - that moment where God's love overcame death, where God's love brought new life out of something that should not have life - is now.

That Resurrection is in every moment.

It is in those moments of joy and celebration when we go hunting for Easter eggs, or when we gather with our community and sing, "Jesus Christ is risen today,"; and the moment of Resurrection is also in the difficult moments - the moments of loss and the moments of pain. That Resurrection moment is happening at bedsides, when someone is dying and preparing to enter into God's household in a way that we can only begin to imagine. That Resurrection moment is happening when people stand in the

face of racism and sexism and homophobia and ableism, and classism, and when people knock on their neighbor's doors and make sure that they have enough to eat.

The Resurrection happens in every moment, calling us to be people of life, and new life, and miraculous life - here in our virtual spaces, In the relationships we have one with another, and in the relationships we have with all creation.

We are people of the Resurrection. There is nothing that can separate us from that.

Ever.

So sibs, in this moment and in the moments to come, let us live as a Resurrection people. Let us live the reality, not only that hope is coming, but that hope lives now. Let's live Easter in every moment of our lives.

Let's look for the Risen Christ - because we know the Risen Christ is right here.

I'm not going to say Happy Easter, because Easter isn't always happy.  
But I'll wish you a Blessed Easter. Blessed by the Resurrection here, and now.

Blessed Easter to you all.

Amen and Amen!