

Easter Sunday C, April 21, 2019. Luke 24:1-12.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! Today is our great day, our festival day, the day of our victory, won for us by our brother Jesus. Today is the day that the things that were cast down are raised up, things that had grown old are made new. Christ is alive again, we are alive again, the world rises up to kiss its maker. Death is trampled down, the grave is burst open, hell is defeated and empty. Today is the day of joy, of laughter, of song. Today is baptism day, the day we welcome Will, Sunil, Narayan, and Avinash into the household of God. Today is resurrection day, the day that we see that nothing nothing nothing is more powerful than the love of God.

Today is the day that God is creating a new heavens and new earth, when Jerusalem is created a joy and weeping is banished. The wolf and the lamb are feeding together, the women are coming with the truth spilling out of them, the men are dumbfounded or, at best, amazed. The tomb is empty, and Jesus has gone on out ahead of us, calling us forward into new life.

New life calls for a party, but it doesn't *just* call for a party. Easter calls us to dance and sing, to get a little wild, a little un-Episcopalian, but it isn't just a matter of having one really great morning. I am thinking this morning about these women, the first evangelists, the first apostles, the founders of the church: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and several more women. In light of recent-ish events we might focus in on the fact that they came with the truth and were not believed, but I am actually thinking of their arrival at the tomb, and what the resurrection first asked of them.

They come to do the hardest duty of faith—to care for the body of the one they loved and followed. I am imagining the courage and strength it must have taken for them to come like this. They had followed Jesus all the way down from Galilee, had participated in the triumphal entry at the city gates a week before, had heard him beating the collaborationist religious leaders in debate all week, and then had finally sat with him for that last supper and followed him after his arrest down to the palace and out to Golgotha. I can't help but wonder when their week inexorably turned—when it went from excitement to fear to resignation. When they realized that he was going to die. And now on the third day, whatever they had hoped for earlier, however they had been disappointed, however scared they were—they are here. They have come to care for the body because that is what you do for someone you love. It must have been excruciatingly difficult to get up the will and courage to come do the hardest things their faith could ask of them. And when they arrive, they find that the terrible beautiful thing they had come to do was as obsolete as the tomb.

Here's the thing about resurrection; here's the thing about the new life that God has made and is making: a lot of really good and difficult things that we may think we have to do don't fit in the resurrected life. God's new world is a world we still have to discover. When death has died, when the world is new, we have to improvise. We have no choice but to trust the Holy Spirit and each other, because we grew up still in a Good Friday world. And God is remaking the world into Easter. God's new work means that curiosity and trust are central Christian virtues. It is a new world, but we are a new people, too, if we let God make us into ourselves. Amen. Alleluia!