

Easter Day homily, 4 April 2021

I love that the women set out early, in the quiet of the morning. I imagine them weary, after all the emotion and now, somehow still and calm, after all the emotion. Calm and determined.

One problem that great big stone – they knew there was a stone, they had made sure they knew where Jesus had been buried - so they must have known about the stone - knew it was rather beyond them to move it – yet they set out early in the morning with their calm determination, their spices and their half made plan.

And then it happens, their half made plan meets a bigger plan, God's plan considered before the foundation of the world. The stone is moved and the tomb is empty. Jesus has risen from the dead. Suddenly all the women's calm and determination dissolves and they are thrown into confusion. Strange really – but we are all different. The men were unhinged by Jesus' death but for the women it is his resurrection that confounds them and makes them flee in terror and amazement.

I wonder why hope and promise should be harder to bear than death and despair? Why is it so hard to believe, now as then that life and transformation and joy are as much part of the world and God, its maker as death and disintegration?

Wellwe have been living with such a lot of death and disintegration over this last year haven't we. We have had to face a lot of death, statistics on the news every day, news of death from friends and perhaps our own loved ones too; this is the harsh reality.

And how do we feel about hope in our situation. Can we bear to think that on 21 June all may be well, be normal. Or do we feel hesitant, a feeling of unease. Surely we can't just rush into a bright new tomorrow. Can we actually cope with joy after all that has been happening; after the emotional rollercoaster of this past year.

There is in us a place for hope and joy and we find that place because our Christian hope of new life is not based on a kind of blind and meaningless optimism, a pair of rose tinted spectacles that wear to shield us from harsh reality. On the contrary, all our hope is scarred with the wounds of the cross, and it is only hope because of that.

So here we are on Easter morning with the Easter fire crackling and the church full of scent of lilly's. We proclaim that Christ is risen and affirm that, he has risen indeed Alleluia. This is why we are here to share this truth, that despite everything that suggests otherwise, the stone is rolled away and new life and transformation beckon. We are here with our half made provisional plans to meet with the living God who holds all our lives, cherishes our hopes and renews our faith.

When we come to your tomb today Lord,
Dare we believe you are no longer there?

Yes we believe, that you are now set free from death's decaying shroud,
your spirit soars spanning the universe, a new day dawns and we joyfully welcome your new creation in Christ Jesus our Saviour. Amen.

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