

**Resurrection of Our Lord, Easter Day**  
**Sunday, April 24, 2011**

Jeremiah 31:1–6 (Alternate)  
Psalm 118:1–2, 14–24  
Acts 10:34–43  
Matthew 28:1–10  
Year A

Alleluia! Christ is risen!  
Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Tombs contain. They keep death in. Jesus was put in a tomb. His tomb was sealed tight with a big stone. His rocky grave was guarded to prevent monkey business.

I have been to my share of tombs. At the grave there is a finality and a sadness beyond words. I have seen my share of sorrows, and grieved until I thought there were no tears left.

I am well acquainted with death. It's life that I'm still getting to know. It's joy that is the biggest surprise.

Thank you, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary for coming to the tomb on Sunday, the day after the Sabbath. You are the ones who bequeathed the joy. You are the ones that told the news. Thank you for running, all the way to the brothers, and presumably all the way to Galilee. Thank you for your telling, for your running, for your fear and great joy.

On that day after the Sabbath, the first day of the week, mirroring creation's start, there was this sound and light show going on. Normally destructive forces revealed God's rebirthing creation. The stone sealed tightly was rolled away. The angel plopped down on the stone he popped from the tomb. *Guards, schmards. Something new is happening here.*

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had to be reassured, so the flashy angel said what angels always say after they scare the pants off someone "Do not be afraid."

*And, you are in the wrong place this morning, at the tomb, at the place of burial. There's nothing here. Where you want to be is where there is life, new life, a new time, a new era, God's life, God's time breaking into this life, bursting into our deaths.* Jesus, seriously suffering, definitely dying, is not contained in a tomb, but now announcing a new world, a new path, a new heaven, a new earth, a new community.

Run for your lives! That's what Mary Magdalene and the other Mary did. They ran for all they were worth, after being acquainted with death, still getting to know life. They ditched death and ran with what? **fear and great joy**, a combination platter. They were well acquainted with death, but what words would they come up with for life?

e.e. cummings, with letters always in lower case, e.e. cummings, the American poet uses staccato for expressing joy. e.e. cummings, always writing in lower case, never known for his syntax, is spot on with jumbled joy words:

*o least who  
sing small thing  
dance little joy*

(shine most prayer)

Can you imagine two breathless women doing their own version of e.e. cummings, saying to the apostles *saw Jesus, empty tomb, meeting you here, wow, angel, ran all the way, dance little joy?*

What do we say? We say Alleluia! in the face of death for God raised Jesus, the first fruit. While we gasp for breath as we race toward life from the place of death, Jesus meets us as he did the women on the Sunday after the Sabbath. And we need to be reassured, while we worship this morning, as from Jesus himself with words "Do not be afraid."

*dance little joy* this Easter day, this Feast of feasts, this week of weeks, this Queen of Seasons. We have waited for this for Lent's Forty Days, which as you know is Bible talk for a long time.

Last night we gathered in the dark, lighting candles from a new fire, keeping vigil, telling stories that have been told for eons that God is always about something new, always bringing life from death. At last night's vigil we gathered around the font, to recognize Jesus meeting us in our deaths, when this past winter was so brutal, where even now violence and savagery and war and human misery seem to hold sway. Around the water, lighting candles in the night, we said **no** evil and the forces that draw us from God.

There Jesus met us, in the night, through the stories, in the water, as the Spirit danced in us, and we announced this new life coming to us as sure as the dawn, as filling us as a feast in bread and wine. *Weeping may linger in the night, but joy comes in the morning.*

Bethesda people, who frame your identity in healing waters that give new life, whose root story says rise, take up your mat and walk: know life today, this first day of the week, this Sunday, this eighth day, this Easter morning. See life peeking through the flowers. Taste life in Eucharistic bread and wine. Feel life as you are greeted by the community who shares peace. Sing, and feast for all you're worth, here, today, this Pascha, and for Fifty Days of Easter, which as you know means a really long time.

Run for your lives! Find words that speak joy. Hold onto and worship the risen Christ where you live and breathe, thankful for the Marys who worshiped, who ran, who told, who coming to the place of death, combined fear with joy.

When in doubt, say Alleluia!

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Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!