

## **Carol's and Jeff's reflection – Easter Sunday**

The writers of the Gospels help us to 'see' many of the events of this holy Week. They describe events so that we can imaginatively picture what it might have looked like if we had been there.

We can 'see' Jesus riding on a mule into Jerusalem.

We can 'see' Jesus overturning tables in the temple market area.

We can 'see' Jesus tearing a loaf of bread and then passing pieces to his companions.

We can 'see' disciples sleeping in the garden while Jesus kneels in prayer.

We can 'see' torchlights bobbing in the darkness as Jesus is arrested.

We can 'see' Jesus being questioned, a crown of thorns being shoved onto his head; can 'see' him carrying his cross; can 'see' hammer pounding nails, and can see a crucified Jesus hanging on that wooden cross.

The Gospel writers describe those events. They allow us to 'see' those events through their words.

But there is one event that none of the gospel writers describe. There is one moment we are not invited to 'see', not even by means of their words.

And it is a significant moment!

We never 'see' Jesus walk out of the tomb!

No Gospel writer shows us that stone being rolled away. No Gospel writer describes a scene in which Jesus sits up in the tomb, removes the cloths that covered him and then walks out into the garden.

We will 'see' the stone only after it has been rolled away. We will also 'see' a messenger dressed in white, sitting inside the tomb, but the body of Jesus has already left the tomb.

In some of the Gospel accounts, we will see a figure, at first thought to be a gardener, who turns out to be Jesus - as the creeds say - "crucified and risen."

But we never see what happens between Jesus being laid in a tomb and the tomb being empty!

We never see this life begin again after death...



Which is what we should expect, because this is God's big moment, and God's big moments tend to be moments done in secret. God seems to prefer a fair degree of anonymity!

Maybe that's why Jesus talked about a seed of wheat falling into the ground to die in order for the stalk of wheat to be born. No one watches as the buried seed dies and new life begins.

Maybe we are not meant to 'see' resurrection, but we are meant to experience resurrection...

Because maybe Easter isn't about seeing a resuscitated corpse walk out of a tomb; but about discovering that not only can we entrust our life to God, but we can entrust our death to God, because neither life nor death removes us from the love of God that no words can ever encompass.

The Gospel of Mark has an odd ending. While other gospel writers tell of people seeing the resurrected Jesus, the writer of Mark's gospel doesn't include any appearances of Jesus who was dead and now is alive.

Mark's Gospel ends with three women – Mary, Mary and Salome – going to the tomb, discovering that the stone has been rolled away, meeting a young man dressed in a white robe who tells them that Jesus has been raised and that they and Jesus' other companions will see Jesus again in Galilee.

And then comes the concluding sentence of Mark's Gospel:

"So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid."

Since we have this story told in Mark's Gospel, we can probably assume that at some point they did say something to someone about what happened at the tomb.

Because even though they did not see the stone actually being rolled away, and Jesus didn't stroll out of the tomb to greet them... ...SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED!!!

Not seen by human eyes, not recorded by any eyewitness journalist, not etched into a slab of stone by any artist sitting in the garden...God had done something!

God had raised Jesus!

God had begun again the Jesus story – the story that powerful people believed they had forever ended by executing Jesus.

While some celebrated Jesus's death and some grieved Jesus' death, God transformed Jesus' death into a new reality we call resurrection. God transformed Jesus' death into a new Jesus life – and that new Jesus life would somehow give new life to those who



grieved;

That life would somehow transform the grievers into good news proclaimers;

That life would somehow transform those who were afraid into courageous carriers of hope

That life would somehow transform the world from a place of ending into a place of new creation.

This Easter, we see many things happening in our world – some concern us, some encourage us – but as people of this resurrection life, we trust that unseen is the amazing activity of God, bringing life out of despair, and birthing new expressions of love and new embodiments of Christ's presence.

Easter tells us that the most significant events and moments may not be 'seen', because they are God's moments of resurrection.

The tomb is empty. God has raised Jesus. And the resurrected Christ will meet us again and again to assure us that again and again, this is God's world. We live in God's love...and God is still doing something amazing, wondrous and deeply loving.

Thanks be to God. AMEN