

Matt. 28: 1-10

**After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning,  
Mary of Magdala came with Mary to inspect the tomb.  
Suddenly, there was a severe earthquake,  
and an angel of God descended from heaven,  
rolled back the stone and sat on it.  
The angel's appearance was like lightning,  
with garments white as snow.**

**The guards shook with fear and  
fell down as though they were dead.**

**Then the angel spoke, addressing the women: "Do not be afraid.  
I know you are looking for Jesus the crucified, who is no longer here.  
Jesus has been raised, exactly as it was foretold.  
Come and see the burial place.  
Then go quickly and tell the disciples  
that Jesus has risen from the dead and  
now goes ahead of you to Galilee.  
You will see Jesus there.  
That is the message I have for you."**

**The women hurried away from the tomb with awe and great joy  
and ran to carry the good news to the disciples.**

**Suddenly Jesus stood before them and said, "Shalom!"**

**The women came up, embraced Jesus' feet and worshiped.**

At this Jesus said to them “Do not be afraid!  
Go tell the disciples to go to Galilee, where they will see me”

**Meditation:**

**Breath.....**

*Bowl....*

**Breath....**

*Bowl.....*

**Somewhere in the world at this very moment:  
a new borne babe is taking her first breath ...  
and someone else is taking their last...**

**Somewhere in the world at this very moment:  
a flower is turning towards the sun and beginning to open its soft petals...  
butterflies are reaching their summer homes after a long,  
exhausting migration north...  
someone is taken aim and firing a pistol...  
someone else is welcoming a long lost son...**

**somewhere in the world at this very moment...  
rivers are tumbling,  
mountains are growing,  
ants are marching,  
lions are hunting,  
people are crying,  
others are singing,**

**Make no mistake...**

**we live in a world full of wonder, unanswered questions and mystery.**

**How is it that we are here on this gorgeous Easter morning,  
under these brilliant blue skies  
our hearts beating, our blood flowing,  
oxygen passing through our lungs...  
and we ...more or less...don't even have to think about it!**

**Wow! Just think for a moment all things we don't have to pay attention to  
that take care of themselves...**

**Think about all the things we don't have to manage and by golly!  
they still continue to flourish on their own...**

**Think about all the things we don't create and still new life begins and begins  
ever again ...**

**The ability to experience life is magnificent!**

**But what does it mean?**

**Does it have a purpose?**

**Why are we here, alive and aware?**

**What comes next?**

**Is this all there is?**

**People have asked these questions since the beginning of time...  
and people, since the beginning of time, have offered a whole variety  
of explanations and answers...**

**This day...**

**we come together celebrate the highest holy day in the Christian Tradition...Easter.  
It is a story that we often tell with a nonchalance...**

a matter- of- fact kind of attitude,  
as if someone rising from the dead is an ordinary, every day kind of event!  
but of course it isn't ...is it????

The magnificence of Easter lies in the knowing that *whatever* his followers experienced that Sunday morning was so profound that they were willing to give up their own lives rather than deny what they now understood to be true:

Death was not ...is not....the end of Life.

His disciples now understood that even the most horrible, torturous death humanity could come up with,  
could not destroy life.

That the God of Jesus of Nazareth held his beloved son through life,  
and through physical death  
and now life continues on the other side of physical death.

When we get that...when we really get understand that Life never ends  
but is transformed in ways we cannot yet imagine...  
That knowing, that understanding has the ability to  
take away our fear of death...  
our fear of what happens when someone we love breathes their last...  
what happens when we breathe our last...

and while that in and of itself...is amazing and wonderful,  
the Easter Story that we remember and celebrate this morning  
also confirms Jesus' life.

It confirms what he absolutely knew to be true:

**that God is only Love: unconditional Love.  
That God is not a Judge disconnected from God's creation  
but that God cares for the lost and lonely,  
the disconnected and the marginalized...  
That God desires we take care of each other...  
that we are not to worry about political or religious boundaries...  
that we are to let kindness and compassion and generosity flow  
to all in need no matter who they are...whether they 'deserve' it or not.**

**That God is a God of unboundaried graciousness and love...  
that we do not have to be 'good enough' to earn God's love or God's forgiveness...but it is  
all ready given before we even realize we need it.**

**This Gracious Love is no wimpy sentimentality but  
it is the very Power that created the Cosmos...  
And if that was not enough...**

**We also celebrate our Resurrection  
when as we rise above despair and loneliness...  
when we rise above bitterness and ego centeredness...  
when we rise above worry and fear...**

**You know, let's face it...  
we will never have all the answers about life or about God...  
And that is where Faith comes in.  
But faith isn't blind assent to doctrines and dogmas that cramp our brains...  
Faith is trusting in a Compassionate and unconditionally Loving God...**

**There is a quote from the children's classic: The Little Prince by Antoine Saint-Exupery,  
that helps me deal with the unanswerable questions about God and Life. He said:**

**“It is only with the heart that one can see rightly...  
what is essential is invisible to the eye”**

**The teachings of Jesus are the teachings of the heart.  
Jesus was put to death by people who clung to their thoughts of fear and envy...  
they could not listen with their hearts,  
they could not see the gift of Love that he was offering to them...**

**The women in our Gospel reading this morning,  
Mary of Magdala and the other Mary...  
were among his closest followers.  
They Loved Jesus and so when they were greeted by the angel  
and when they found out he was not in his tomb  
they were filled, not with fear,  
but with awe and great joy.  
And when they met Jesus, they embraced him.**

**It is love that allows us to see with our hearts,  
to see beyond the scope of physical death...  
to see beyond the fear...**

**It is Love that helps us to see and appreciate all the beauty and magnificence  
of this planet we call home...  
It is Love that helps us to hold all the questions of Life even as we seek  
new answers...  
and It is Love that helps us to trust in the Compassion,  
the Kindness and the Power of God...  
and it is Love that helps us to know with our hearts  
that Love never dies.  
and Life never ends.**

**and It is Love that helps us to sing: Alleluia, He has risen  
and so shall we!**

**and for this we can whisper:**

**Thank you.**

**Amen.**