

Easter

April 16, 2006

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 31:9-16

Philippians 2:5-11

Luke 24:1-12

In the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Alleluia, He is Risen!

“Why do you seek the living among the dead?”

“He is not here, He is Risen.”

In a moment – in six terse words – everything, everything is changed.

God has broken the cycle – the seemingly inevitable progression of life and death. Death is no longer an end; it is a passage, a transformation to eternal life in the presence of God.

The most momentous proclamation is made to whom? To whom is this great Good News entrusted? Not to kings or high priests – not to scribes or theologians – not to philosophers. It is made to a few faithful women in the light of dawn at an empty tomb.

Go back just a little while – a few minutes – to the journey of those women to that tomb. They are wrapped in the black garments of mourning. They are wrapped in the blackness of the night – the darkness of their own grief. They are silent, lost in thought.

Hear their soft footsteps on cobblestones and dirt paths, small sounds in a dark, just waking city. Hear the muffled, distant barking of a dog, the crow of a cock, the dull thud of a distant axe cutting the wood for the day. A small world; an intimate world.

Then, the shattering of that familiar world at an empty tomb and an angel of brightness.

What do those six words proclaim? What do they proclaim this morning? What is the message given not simply to those women but to all humanity for all time?

They proclaim God's love. They proclaim a love so great, so all-encompassing, so universal, that no sacrifice is too great for us. His Son, Our Lord's life and death have been for us, for our salvation, personally and individually. They proclaim that we are never abandoned, never alone, even in the darkest and deepest moments of grief and loss and depression.

In darkest night we have the promise of dawn.

In deepest despair we have the promise of comfort.

In a world, in a life, that has grown cold is the promise of the warmth of the sunrise.

All this the angel proclaims, now, this morning;

"Alleluia, Christ is Risen!"

In His Holy Name.