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St. John's Episcopal Church
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The Great Vigil of Easter (Mark 16:1-8)

“Terror and amazement had seized them.”

Well, duh. I guess so! The women had gone to the tomb to anoint Jesus' lifeless body with oil and spices and... he wasn't there!

Where could he have gone?

The young man in white tells them, “He has been raised.”

Where could he have gone?

And what did that *mean*? What did it mean that this Jesus, their friend and Lord and Messiah, had been *raised*?!? You mean, he's not *dead* anymore?!?

Yup. Not dead. Raised.

No longer among the living like you and me, but crucified, dead, and *alive*.

But the question isn't just “What happened” or “Where did he go” but “What does this mean?”

What did it mean to the women... and what does it mean to *us*?

This past week I was thinking about the crucifixion. About how from high up on the cross, as one of us said, Jesus looked down upon the whole world, all our brokenness, all our sin, all our mess-ups, and in mercy said, “Father forgive them.” Bloody, in dreadful pain, suffocating, Jesus last thoughts were prayers of compassion for all humankind. It wasn't about himself, the agony he must have been experiencing, but about *us*.

And then he died.

And then he was raised!

And he is *alive* and here and in the streets and ghettos and mansions and churches, he is *alive* in *every single one of us*.

That's resurrection to me. The resurrection – Christ Jesus, living and breathing – is in every single one of us.

God has spoken. God has said that death, hatred, oppression do not have the last word: God does. God has said that our broken lives can be mended. God has said that there is forgiveness. God has said that love triumphs over fear. God *promises* resurrection.

We are a people of the resurrection – look around, and you will see little resurrections everywhere you look.

You see *compassion* in someone who wrote a check so I could issue a grocery voucher for a woman living in a motel. You see *hope* in children and college students and older adults who courageously marched to plead for a sensible end to gun violence. You see *renewal* in someone who reminded me of his first Maundy Thursday – and experiencing the very real presence of Christ in the Garden of Repose. You see *courage* in Col. Arnaud Beltrame, who gave his life in exchange for a hostage in France, saving hers. You see *love* in volunteers giving up a good night's sleep to care for homeless people.

Death couldn't stop Jesus Christ, political power couldn't stop Jesus Christ, *nothing* stops Jesus Christ. He is risen! He is *alive!* *His* resurrection is *our* resurrection. *His* resurrection is God's love out loud. *Our* resurrections are God's love in action.

Because it doesn't mean a whole lot unless we put love to action. The resurrection of Jesus the Christ is, sure, astounding and wondrous and I'm not sure about all the mechanics of it, but I know that Jesus the Christ is alive, offering resurrection to each of us in our darkest, most broken moments.

We all go through our own Good Fridays. We experience the heartache of our own brokenness and the tragedies of our broken world – the sins of racism and poverty and misogyny and abuse. We make it through those Good Fridays and at some point we realize, "I am loved. I am lovable. I am forgiven." And we are raised from the dead. The resurrection assures us that Good Friday isn't forever, that we will not dwell in a dark valley for eternity, but that Easter will come. Resurrection will happen.

Because we are forgiven and loved, and because God has the power to raise Jesus and raise us. God has the power to transform us. To make a cruel person kind. To make a racist woke. To make a selfish person a human of compassion. They're all resurrections because they are the power of God working in, around, and through us.

Yes, it's important.

If you responded to the Baptismal Covenant, you're in very deep water. Take the bulletin home with you and re-read what you promised. Do it prayerfully, deliberately.

And then do something.

Make sense of the cross and the resurrection by being a resurrection people.

In a few moments we will share the Body and Blood of Christ. The essence of Christ will re-enter our very beings through blessed bread and wine. We shall be refreshed, restored, renewed.

And when we sing our Alleluias it will be not be just about Jesus the Christ.

Resurrection will be about us.

Amen.