

Easter Sunday



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH Lary Moffet, Senior Pastor APRIL 12, 2012

Everyday Resurrections

It really relieves me to realize the first followers of Jesus thought the Resurrection was merely a few ordinary, everyday events.

I'm not surprised that they mistook the importance of the event. As much as Mary loves Jesus, she thinks the Risen Lord for a gardener. Peter sees an ordinary cloth. He doesn't realize what happened at first. The Beloved Disciple, motivated to win a race with Peter to the tomb, can't quite figure out what happened. He simply looks around and goes home.

Jesus choose to make his Resurrection known through everyday details: He speaks Mary's name when she mistakes him for a gardener.

His shroud is left behind, neatly folded, in the empty tomb.

Notice, too, the Risen Christ doesn't rebuke Mary for not recognizing him. Jesus does not lecture Peter for holding the cloth and not realizing the Resurrection had happened. Jesus does not make fun of the Beloved Disciple for seeing an empty tomb and then going home.

If you and I miss out on the Spiritual meaning of everyday events, we can take comfort in knowing we're in good company!

Easter invites us to open our hearts/ minds to the many ways everyday resurrection is a part of our life. What are we missing? How is Jesus calling our name?

Let's be honest. We experience everyday resurrections each day of our lives.

Yet we trivialize them. We say they are luck, or coincidences. Worse yet, we ignore the signs that Resurrections are happening all around us. We miss things that are really important. We easily forget who we are and Whose we are.

Instead we get obsessed with things that don't matter. We'd rather talk about other people's problems than see where Christ is present in our own. We think "little." We act "little." We miss the big things God is doing. We choose to get ourselves so busy that we fail to see how God is working through the everyday stuff of life to reach us, claim us, and embrace us.

Eugene Peterson wrote a paraphrase of the Bible: *The Message*. He also wrote a book, *The Resurrected Christ in Everyday Life*, and tells about a friend who traveled to spend time with her very verbal 6-year-old granddaughter. At 5 a.m. the little girl crawled in bed with her and said "Grandma, let's not have any God talk, okay? I know God is everywhere. Let's just get on with life."

Easter calls us to "get on with life." Jesus uses the details of life to tune our lives to huge spiritual truths.

We all feel something of the deep personal love of Christ. That's why we're here on Easter, and on Sundays. We just can't stay away.

Down deep we know that there is meaning in the ordinary events of life, deep meaning. The Divine is present, in a personal way, in ordinary stuff of life.

L: Christ is Risen! All: Christ is Risen, indeed!

Look around you. How are you experiencing Resurrection in everyday moments?

Many of you know about Skype. It's a computer program, an application. It lets you see and talk with someone in far-off countries. For free. Thanks to Skype, my Mother sees and talks with her granddaughter Kara who's working in Spain. Yesterday Mom and Kara talked for an hour. Kara walked Mom through the steps to log on to *YouTube* so Mom could see the Easter Festival Kara is attending in Seville. Mother was thrilled. An everyday resurrection!

Staying in touch with a loved one who's far away is a little resurrection. So is spending a little time with a good friend and feeling as if you were never apart. A hundred things we see or do everyday are resurrections.

On my trip to the big family reunion in California I ate at a restaurant that is place where young people who have been in trouble with drugs and other addictions can learn to live new lives. The whole place was filled with Resurrection experiences. And the food was wonderful. "Everyday resurrection."

Resurrection happens down the street, every day. Every time I walk into the grocery store that was closed, it is an "everyday resurrection."

This is no accident. Jesus chose to reveal his love in everyday moments of life. Everyday moments hold the presence of the Divine. The ordinary moments of our lives all carry a deep and Sacred power.

**Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God,
But only he who sees takes of his shoes...
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.**

- Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Imagine yourself as Mary, talking with Risen Christ in your ordinary, every-day resurrection moments. Christ loves you as much as Christ loves Mary.

Consider yourself to be Peter, holding an ordinary piece of cloth, the detail that proves there has been a Resurrection. After all, no one robbing a grave would leave behind the body's shroud, or take time to fold it neatly.

Think of yourself as the Beloved Disciple, **looking at an empty tomb:**

Every time we're a part of something small or big that includes rather than excludes, we are a part of a resurrection moment. Every act that makes life better for someone else is part of God's justice. Every act of tender love and caring is a Resurrection moment. Easter Hope claims here and now. Christ Easters new life into our most ordinary moments.

**Easter moves us through the every-day struggles of life to embrace hope.
Easter empowers us to leave behind things that bind us:
fear of the unknown, guilt for our sin,
obsessions with things that don't matter,
distrust of those unlike ourselves, and feelings of failure.**

Easter reminds us you truly are beloved, and are able to include others in the eyes of Christ -- and in the hearts of your church family.

We who follow Jesus experience Resurrection not just once, over and over: look for your Everyday Resurrections. And share them.

Jesus doesn't chide Mary, but he does give her work to do. And us too: **Go to my brothers and sisters [tell them they are part of the resurrection, too!]** Be a part of the Everyday Resurrections all around you. Amen.

EASTER GOSPEL John 20:1-18 NT page 114

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb.

⁴The two were running together; the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in.

⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head,

not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself.

⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed;

⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes.¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb.

As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet.

¹³They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

¹⁴When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there,

but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her,

"Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?"

Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him,

"Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."

¹⁶Jesus said to her, **"Mary!"**

She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her,

"Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to Abba God.

**But go to my brothers and say to them,
'I am ascending to my Abba and your Abba,
to my God and your God.'"**

¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord";

and she told them that he had said these things to her.

EPISTLE SCRIPTURE COLOSSIANS 3:1-4

New Testament, pg. 201

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

²Set your minds on things that are above,
not on things that are on earth, ³

for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

⁴When Christ who is your life is revealed,
then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

Book quoted in today's sermon: Living the Resurrection: the Risen Christ in Every Day Life, Eugene H. Peterson (who is the author of the paraphrase of the Bible known as " <i>The Message</i> ."

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Worship Services at 8:30 & 10:45 AM