

Blessed be God who animates our lives and brings us to dawn on God's holy mountain as witnesses to Resurrection life that we might know the Risen Christ in our lives. Amen

There once was a little girl whose father was a scientist, a physicist, recording observations of dawn. He invited her to accompany him on a field trip. It will begin in the dark and end in the light he said. She was very excited not only because she loved her daddy and all this made her feel very grown up but also because this meant she was allowed to stay up very very late. And so they set out in the late late night, or the early early morning, and drove to a mountain top near their home. Her daddy wrapped a shawl around her shoulders, spread a blanket on a grassy area and she sat, while he set up some sophisticated equipment before joining her.

She became a little anxious in the silence and wanted her father to play a game to help her pass the time. But he gently reminded her that his research involved being as still and silent as possible, watching and listening and feeling as carefully as possible, that he might observe and record something wonderful and unprecedented.

She was very sleepy and yet excited enough to be able to stay awake. Her daddy kept saying "Listen...Look" She saw nothing and heard no sounds except what she thought might be the steady hummm of the stars or a breeze through the trees, the rhythm of the spheres.

Then, so gently so softly almost imperceptibly, she heard a bird chirp, and wondered whether it had been doing so for a while and she had missed it. Also gently the light began to change, not dramatically, but so gradually that it was impossible to know exactly when the change had begun.

Daddy this is beautiful. Yes dear one...this is how the world wakes up everyday. This is what God offers us in nature, the rhythm and mystery of life sleeping and waking. It is like a symphony with God conducting! The rhythms and harmonies are perfect. This is a thin place, difficult to measure, wondrous to experience. She drew her shawl closer as a breeze from a stream came up and blew cooler crisper air her way. She leaned into her daddy and smiled.

This morning we too have engaged in a similar vigil. We, like the child, have come to witness the dawn. ( We too have come out of a wilderness of 40 days to witness the glory of Easter morning) We are witnesses to reenactment of God's creation since Genesis when dark becomes light. When God rested in the goodness and newness of creation.

In Resurrection God has created yet again a new realm!

This experience of watching the sun rise, watching the darkness diminish and the light increase may be the closest metaphor we have for resurrection. We come here this Easter morning not only to sing He is

Risen but to continue to make meaning of the Paschal Mystery, the mystery of all mysteries. We have engaged our senses to experience the change from death into life...resurrected life. We have listened to and sung stories of salvation history all in hope of the Resurrection. All in hope of this sacred moment.

We have wrapped ourselves throughout Lent with the prayer shawl of formation we are knitting to comfort us. We have stayed and waited and prayed. We have cried and cried out. We have heard things, seen things, experienced things which have led us here, sustained us on the way, or tried to impede or misdirect.

And like the little girl and her daddy, we have rested and trusted in the rhythms of God's love until we have come to this place, this space, this edge. We have come to the edge of all we know and as the poet reminds us...He will hold us in our staying and accompany us in our venturing in.

We have come to the edge or thin place of darkness into light, death and life. We have traversed the tragic gap of Holy Saturday with all its emotion of abandonment and loss and grief to rest now at the edge, the opening, the door of an empty tomb. Empty tomb. Yes, empty of the material realities which we have come to expect. But FULL of the mysterious realities of God.

This is the liminal space of Easter. Liminal space is that threshold place between our ego certainty and the mysterious grace-filled space into which God is always inviting us, leading us. This liminal space is resurrection life, it is the Kingdom come very very near. Even if we respect its majesty and wonder, it is natural to feel anxiety and want to flee or touch it minimally because to experience it totally requires the kind of letting go, death really, which Jesus taught and modeled for us.

Then we remember that the most oft used phrase in the Bible is Fear Not....The other side of fear not is to stay...to remain. to rest in God and experience the flow of God's grace.

At least three things are present with us this morning and every morning, in addition to the Risen Christ! and may help us with this experience.

First: Faith has brought us here and is what allows us to stay and experience the fear, the sadness and the joy! Faith like Mary's allows us to know and recognize the Risen One who calls our name. Faith deepened by this experience brings us closer to the eternal life and the Paschal Mystery itself.

Secondly, We are being formed as Christ's disciples. like the little girl we have been given a prayer shawl metaphorically. It is beautiful and strong and multi-hued. It is the prayer shawl we have been knitting during our Lenten journey. Through prayer and practice and worship we have been

offered the material with which to make this shawl and to have it blessed. In our 40 days of prayer and fasting we have woven into our shawls strong threads of contemplative prayer and some of us have added lament to our palette. In our 40 days in the wilderness we have followed the golden thread of obedience shedding our wilfulness for willingness to walk with Jesus. In my own 40 days journeying I have completed my shawl for this moment with the deep blue of memory, the color of wisdom integrating all that has been with what is and is to come.

Thirdly, We are irradiated by the Holy Spirit. we learn something about our imagination which when attuned to the murmurings of the Holy Spirit, allows us to suspend logic and enter that space of mystery which is marked by an incredible lightness of being. This third lesson teaches us to surrender our ego control issues and simply receive the mystery...allow God in this Resurrection, the God for whom ALL things are possible to to Easter us. To reconfigure our expectations. To reconfigure our lives and our relationships.

Resurrection is not just an unimagineable event. Resurrection is the bringing in of God's new realm. Resurrection is both what happened and what is happening!

The other side of Resurrection is eternal life, salvation, redemption, perfect freedom.

We here today are involved in the process of salvation. By virtue of our baptism we belong to God's gracious and loving process whether we

comprehend it or not. Lent offers us the opportunity to comprehend it more fully than we did. Easter offers us the opportunity to experience deep joy if we can simply stay in the hope and accept the mystery!

Just as the little girl brought a child-like innocence and wondrous appreciation for the moment itself, no calculations or expectations or analysis, so might we bring our lenten reduced selves, our humble selves, and simply bask in the infinite possibility this dawn brings. Just as her father, although a scientist, knew there was something more of mystery than of measurement. May we be more engaged in the holy rhythms of God's realm: darkness to light, sleep to awakening, life to death to life again. All rhythms are held in the stillness of God's love.

Tomorrow we continue the process, awed by the power of the Triduum and the empty tomb, we revolve to another level of becoming resurrection people, easter people. But today, newly anointed as such, today we rejoice in the power of the Resurrection by reclaiming and proclaiming Alleluia! And everytime we do may it now be more in furtherance of justice, in furtherance of the Kingdom, in furtherance of the peace which passes all understanding. May you wrap your lenten knit shawl around you and turn toward the God of Easter. May you know resurrection life in your compassion and love for each other. May you be comforted by the God of mercy, inspired by the imagination of the Holy Spirit's inspiration, and walk with Jesus to bind up the broken hearted. As the poet also says, Practice Resurrection.

sermon Easter April 21, 2019  
Rev. Dr. Martha Tucker

Alleluia, Christ is Risen

The Lord is Risen Indeed

Alleluia!