



SERMONS AT SAINT MARK'S

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EASTER DAY, APRIL 20, 2025
ISAIAH 65: 17-25; PSALM 118:1-2, 14-24; ACTS 10:34-43, JOHN 20:1-18

PRACTICE RESURRECTION!

Seen: A Blessing for Easter Day

*You had not imagined
that something so empty
could fill you
to overflowing,
and now you carry
the knowledge
like an awful treasure
or like a child
that roots itself
beneath your heart:
how the emptiness
will bear forth
a new world
that you cannot fathom
but on whose edge
you stand.*

*So why do you linger?
You have seen,
and so you are
already blessed.
You have been seen,
and so you are
the blessing.
There is no other word
you need.
There is simply
to go
and tell.
There is simply
to begin.*

-Jan Richardson

Happy Easter, dear friends!

Jan Richardson's lovely Easter poem reminds us of the promise: "You have been seen, and so you are a blessing!" This is good news as we awaken the dawn of this most glorious day!

And the resurrection account from John's gospel we heard at the outset is, as author Marilynne Robinson maintains, decidedly dialogical—that is, it invites us to participate in the narrative encounter between Mary Magdalene—bewildered, forlorn, unsure, unaware—as she sees and is seen by the risen rabbi, her friend, her beloved Jesus. *You have been seen, and so you are a blessing!*

Easter is a poetic feast to its core! Poesis is the act or process of creating something fresh, life-giving, new. The marrow of our bones is about the work of hemato-poiesis this very instant, the process of making red blood cells, two million every second, each carrying molecules of oxygen that course through your capillaries in single file, delivering life to every cell in your body. How can that not be a poetic thing to consider?!

On this happy morning, I'm reminded of Wendell Berry, the agrarian poet with so much wisdom to share, whose poem [Manifesto](#) delivers an imperative plea for

us to "practice resurrection," but the images that unfold line by line disclose ways this mysterious work can be engaged.

Berry imagines a transformation from the mundane experience of everyday life by practicing presence in the little things, the common things, and tending to them as special. Look for the paradox, the counter-intuitive, and there you will likely find rich fodder for life.

Here are a few lines from Berry's poetic exhortation:

"So, friends, everyday do something that won't compute.

Love the Lord. Love the world...

Love someone who does not deserve it...

Ask the questions that have no answers.

Invest in the millennium.

Plant sequoias..."

Practicing resurrection is about unfolding into a deeper awareness of the mystery of life as a gift from God, who has invested in us across the millennia, and in this minute on this morning, not because it makes any sense to do so, but out of sheer steadfast love which can do no other.

One need not ascribe to some doctrinal definition of resurrection to know in their bones that it is true, that it is

real...how we *“had not imagined that something so empty could fill [us] to overflowing...”*

We Christians imbed this truth in the person and story of Jesus, and we rejoice in the gift he was, and is, and will yet be to the world.

In the mysteries of God, we can say with confidence and great comfort that God has been practicing resurrection all along, is now, and always will be—for our sakes, and invites us into the dialogue of divine life here and now.

And so, as Berry encourages, we can *“be joyful though [we] have considered all the facts.”*

Practice presence in the midst of everyday life.

Like Mary Magdalene, look for the beauty lithely passing by you, causing a wisp of moving air to light on your cheek.

Breathe it in and know that you are alive, you are blessed.

Celebrate the love that melts your heart.

Long for the peace which passes all understanding; look for it on the face of one whom you encounter with a smile, trust that such peace rides on the long arc of the universe that bends toward justice and hitch a ride with it.

Practice resurrection!

My dear friends, may you know an Easter joy in your life this day, and always.

May you know how dearly God holds you as beloved.

May you know the blessings of life, of resurrection life, in all that you do and are.

Christ is Risen, dear friends. He sees you, knows you, blesses you. Alleluia!

John 20:1-18 *[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. So 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." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes. But Mary stood*

weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and 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. They 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." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus 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." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.]



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