

A Sight for Sore Eyes

John 20: 11-15

11 But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13 Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?"

She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

14 Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?"

There was a lot of crying on the first Easter. And why not? The one whom they called Rabbi had died a horrible, humiliating, and unjustified death. Whatever hopes the disciples, including the women, had were gone for good. And Jesus had become their best friend at this point. I bet Lazarus took it particularly hard because his friend had given him new life and now the same death had taken his friend. None of it was fair.

To add insult to injury, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early in the morning, saw the stone rolled away, and believed there had been a theft 'by the enemies.' And she wept. John uses a Greek word that means 'audible, uncontained grief' which shows the powerful connection between Jesus and Mary.

For years scientists have struggled to understand tears. Charles Darwin called them 'purposeless.' Other animals shed tears as a reflex but only human beings shed tears brought on by emotion. There seems to be consensus that babies cry in order to solicit attention and care that they need.

It's the adults crying that makes some scientists scratch their heads. Adults cry for the same reason babies do: We are letting others know that we are going through a crisis over which we have little control for the time being. In fact, the tears we cry while chopping onions are not the same tears we cry from emotion. Emotional tears have more protein which makes them thicker so that they stay on our faces longer in order to communicate to someone else that we are hurting and we might need their help and support.

On the first Easter, Mary Magdalene was in a situation over which she had little control and she needed the support of her new Christian community. If this virus has taught us anything, it is that we all need one another. We need Christian community. We look forward to gathering again, no more taking worship for granted for anyone.

Famed anthropologist Margaret Mead was once asked what was the first sign of civilization in a culture. Tools? Pottery? And she said the first sign of civilization in a culture is a broken femur (thigh bone) that has healed. Any animal who breaks a femur in the wild cannot get food, cannot get to the river for water, and becomes prey for the other animals. But a healed femur means that someone stayed with the person, bound up the wound, carried the person to safety, and helped them recover. 'Helping someone through difficulty is where civilization starts' said Mead. 'We are at our best when we serve others.'

When Jesus called Mary by name, she knew her circumstances were no longer beyond her. She had seen the Lord. And he was the sight her cried out, sore eyes needed. Not only on that first Easter, but for the rest of her life.

Church, we will see the Lord, and we will see him in each other like never before. And our sore eyes will receive what our sore souls have desperately needed all along.

He is not in the tomb. He is RISEN! He is risen INDEED!

On this Easter, let us pray:

We are not people of fear:

we are people of courage.

We are not people who protect our own safety:

we are people who protect our neighbours' safety.

We are not people of greed:

we are people of generosity.

We are your people God,

giving and loving,

wherever we are,

whatever it costs

For as long as it takes

wherever you call us. In the name of the Risen Christ. Amen.

This Easter Sunday, join us live on our Facebook page: Servants of Christ United Methodist Parish.



He Is Risen INDEED!