

Festal Choral Matins, Easter Sunday

Father Tim

'Now this is not the end, it is not even the beginning of the end, but it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning'. This was Churchill's famous line from a speech broadcast from a mansion house in 1942, to try and capture that the Allies had achieved significant victories in the second world war he wanted to convey that the war was far from over and there would be much more to do to achieve victory. Throughout history there are many turning points in how we think about what it means to be a human community. The need for social solidarity post second world war led to the establishment of the welfare state. Where universal health care and social security were established. History buffs will be able to point to many turning points in History of vital importance.

The Church this morning makes a bold claim: that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the central moment in history. That the isolation of death has been defeated. With the words from a young man to a group of women. He is risen. Is this the beginning of something or does it mark the end. Or can it be the end of the beginning and the beginning of the end. Because something has been concluded but it seems the story has not been resolved. Unlike the other Gospel accounts, the original ending, that we hear this morning, Jesus doesn't appear. Although the readers hope has been ignited. When we are told that the stone has been rolled away. And this young man appears.

Who is this young man? Who seems to know so much. Why does it tell us he is sitting at the right hand side. Why does it tell us he is in white robe. He knows they seek Jesus who he tells them is no longer just the Nazarene but identified now as the crucified one. This young man is a symbol of a *'transformed disciple'*. Where the disciples have squabbled and competed to sit at God's right side, this young man is now positioned on the right side, he wears a white robe, the same colour as Jesus' garments in the transfiguration. And as he identifies Jesus as the crucified one, the proper confession of a transformed disciple with culminates with he is risen.

Death's ultimate power has been put to an end. This concludes and also begins. Because we are told that Jesus is waiting for them in Galilee. This is curious. This is Jesus reopening the disciples story. Where in our lessons leading up to Easter have told us, they have scattered, Peter has denied Jesus 3 times around the camp fire, so it seems that Jesus has wasted no time in reconstructing these disciples as a community. They have followed him up to Jerusalem but they are told that they must follow him back to Galilee. Where they will see him in the place where it all began, where they first met Jesus. Where Peter was called, named, sent on a mission and taught by Jesus. A story which seemed to have ended is beginning again. This victory of resurrection is the central moment of History. Because it the point in History where reconciliation has been established forever. That which was lost can

now be found. A truth that was for this transformed community. A truth that echoes through time to be with us this morning. That God transforms stories, re-establishes that which we thought had ended. That we can be transformed, like the young man into Christ's likeness.

We can re discover our story as disciples of Christ. This hasn't happened through brute force but through the love and sacrifice. That could be achieved by the death of one who embodies the condition of a pure victim. In a human world where it is not clear distinguishable between oppressors and victims. Only through Jesus' death could transformation and reconciliation be found for creation as. 1 Peter tells us *'when he suffered, he did not threaten'* no violence was returned and now this resurrected life embodies unconditional acceptance and love for those who are victims of violence in this world, who because he is risen, begins the story of grace over human sin.

This morning we recognise the what battles or hardships that we may be facing that grace prevails and allows us to follow Jesus as transformed disciples. Because we this morning we get a glimpse of paradise and while victory has been won there are those who live like they are still on the battlefield, they are still on the battle field and haven't yet heard that peace has been declared. Or like a chess game where the game has been won even though the player can still play a few more moves. We live in this post resurrection space, where the old story has ended and a new story will bring about the completion

The Easter message asks us to live out our lives as transformed disciples. Where we are able to explicitly proclaim where forgiveness has its source, in the resurrection of the crucified one. To live as transformed disciples who cannot be understood apart from Jesus, who are fully immersed in the easter event, that our lives as disciples and as a community are a testimony of the risen-ness of Jesus. Who becomes the centre of our life and this commitment doesn't just talk about this risen-ness or even celebrate but is a place where Jesus is shown. Gods deep desire was to be with us, the sacrifice and resurrection of God's son established this story in our lives.

We can proclaim this central moment in History. So may the joy of the resurrection be our reality no matter what we are facing - that we are transformed disciples of he who has triumphed over sin and death.

Happy Easter