

Alive

Sermon notes for the sermon
Given by Rev. Dr. Gregory B. Young
On Easter Sunday, April 24, 2011

Dr. Henry Frankenstein shouted: "Look! Its moving. Its alive, its alive...its alive, its moving, its alive, its alive, its alive, IT'S ALIVE!

Victor, Dr. Frankenstein's trusted assistant was awe struck: "Henry!

To which Henry Frankenstein replied: "Oh, in the name of God! Now I know what it feels like to be God!"

Compare the arrogance of these words to those of the 17th century Anglican priest, The Reverend John Donne: "No one ever saw God and lived; and yet, I shall not live till I see God; and when I have seen God I shall never die." On this day we come face to face with God as we behold the risen Christ. The shouts of hope, "Hosanna, Hosanna!" have died giving way to the shouts of despair, "Crucify, Crucify!" But these shouts too have died and given way to shouts of a deeper hope and a brighter joy, "ALIVE, ALIVE! The one who was dead is now ALIVE!" Today we are blessed by no virtue of our own to look upon Jesus, raised from the dead and through the eyes of faith we come to behold our God.

What a source of elation and release the resurrection must have been for the first followers of Jesus on that very first Easter morning! The disciples, who had all betrayed and deserted him, came to experience the depth of God's grace and love as they gazed upon the living body of Jesus. The one they had betrayed did not turn his back on them but, instead, stayed in their company and taught the disciples of the very depth of God's love for them and for all humanity.

The message of the resurrection is that no matter how badly we have betrayed and deserted God in our own lives, God has not deserted us. God meets us in the middle of our life's problems, challenges, hurts and pains and brings to us living hope through the One who was raised from the dead. In the words of the Great

Easter Vigil, "The power of this morning dispels all evil; washes guilt away; restores lost innocence; brings mourners joy; it casts out hatred; brings peace; and, humbles earthly pride." The shame of that first Easter morning was that Judas, the one who betrayed Jesus to the authorities and was paid handsomely for his betrayal, killed himself before he knew this reality. Had he lived with the thoughts of his treacherous deed until meeting with the risen Jesus, he would have then known that he too was loved and was offered the saving grace of God in Jesus the Christ, the Messiah.

The whole of creation is transformed by the power of resurrection. The dark night of the soul is past. God, in Christ, has won for us the victory over the powers in our lives that would drive us to despair and death. ALIVE! ALIVE! HE IS ALIVE! Perhaps the whole of the Easter story has been captured in these thoughts of the late Mother Teresa of Calcutta: "Never let anything so fill you with sorrow as to make you forget the joy of Christ Risen. We all long for heaven where God is, but we have it in our power to be in heaven with Him right now – to be happy with Him at this very moment. But being happy with Him now means:

Loving as He loves,
 Helping as He helps,
 Giving as He gives,
 Serving as He serves,
 Rescuing as He rescues,
 Being with Him 24 hours a day,
 Touching Him in His distressing guise of the lost and forgotten of
 the world."

Today we proclaim with the church throughout the ages that Christ is risen, He is risen indeed!" We live because He lives. Through the power of His resurrection we are transformed into His body, the church, the community of faith established

upon the reality of Jesus' life, teaching, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension. He lives, our Savior is ALIVE!

Thanks be to God. Amen.