

Fear Not the Time of Change

Pitt Street Uniting Church, 12 April, 2020

A Contemporary Reflection by Rev Karyn Burchell-Thomas

Resurrection Sunday A

Matthew 28: 1-10

This reflection can be viewed on You Tube at <https://pittstreetuniting.org.au/spirit/reflections/>

When we began the journey of Lent, little did we know that the journey that we talked of *being a time of transformation*, would have been quite the transforming journey we have experienced to date.

We began in the church, gathering as a people in the same space, sharing the same space. And we began with the image of a dry creek bed - because we had just lived through droughts and fires and all the trauma that brought so many people - with homes and lives lost and all that that brings. We soon experienced rain which was a great blessing and it eventually put out all of the great fires and gave rest to those who had been fighting them for so long. And we think of those people now, many of whom are still recovering and will take some time to recover from the trauma of that - and needing to rebuild.

Just when we thought we might be beginning to get things on a straight keel again, Covid 19 came along and the whole world has been affected ever since. And we're in the middle of that pandemic now and our lives have changed quite dramatically in ways most, if not all of us, would ever have experienced in our lives.

So the journey has been one, not to take us out, but to bring us into our homes and in isolation and yet realizing how much community is important to us; and so we do all we can to keep community alive. It's a great comfort to hear from friends, to talk to them sometimes, to see them over the Internet. To pass people in the street when we must go out for essentials - at a distance but nodding, smiling respectfully, spending time. Neighbors are talking as they pass by with their dogs. Again that grace and respect. It's the distances, appreciating the air, appreciating the sun, appreciating the basic things of life.

One of the things that we did at the very beginning of our Lenten journey was to plant some seeds. Seeds that in order to be seeds, had had a life on a plant, in a flower and had died to that flower - and planted in the ground, had all the potential for new life. I have planted some of those seeds and have some of the seedlings with me now. We have nasturtiums and we have rocket and we have the beginnings of some carrots. We also have some mustard and we have some zucchini and the whole range of things going on here. Radishes.

There's new scenes, showing that even when things look like there's no potential and no future, in the tiniest little seeds new life comes. And eventually, if careful, these will feed us and provide beauty and also help with air. Everything will work for good, if we allow it.

So our journey through lent has certainly been one that has given us some food for thought - as we delve deeply into who we are and what the world is all about. All nations have changed the way they think and the way they fund and the way they look after things to care for their people. But there are still many in grave need - and it will be some time before we can all move on to whatever this new life will be. I think it won't be quite the same as the old one. I think we may have learned some lessons along the way. I hope so. Perhaps all of us will learn to appreciate the most important things in life - each other, the earth, and caring for each other and caring for the earth.

This is the day we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus in the lives of his disciples, who forever after that proclaimed that new life was possible because he was living in and through them. A whole new life was possible for them after death, just like the seed coming to new life.

New life came to them, first to the women in the garden, running and saying *he is with us again*. Not as he was before but in some new way that has stayed with us forever.

I can't imagine what it was like on that day for them, or even in the years to follow. I can only say what it's been like for me. Our resurrection experience can only ever be one that we experience internally in many ways, but that have external consequences.

Our lives change. Our thinking changes. Our relationships change. the way we approach things, the way we look at things, the way we appreciate things, the way we care for things - are touched by Christ in ways that will help us see them differently, maybe a little more as God sees them, the source of life itself. Sees everything with love and care and compassion and grace.

So on this Resurrection Day we celebrate, still in isolation, but not separated in any way at all.

We are linked by the spirit of life. It is alive and vibrant and helping us to see as we may never have seen before.

And the world is healing a little right now. When we're doing less in the world, there's less pollution, and some good things are happening to the earth, to the air. May we learn from that as well.

May I wish you a very blessed and peaceful Easter and resurrection day. May it be a time to appreciate all the good things, look forward to new things to come, because they will and they are - even when they may, like seeds, look like there's nothing there.

God bless you. Happy Easter.