

“On The Third Day”

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UCC at The Villages, FL
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Easter Sunday Son Rise

Luke 24:1-12

[The angels said,]

" Remember that while he was still in Galilee, he told you,
"The Son of Man will be handed over to sinners
who will nail him to a cross. But three days later he will rise to life."

Luke 24:6b-7

Let us pray... O God,

Let Christ be re-born in us today.

May our eyes be open to see your Kingdom

May we be listening for your Good News

to guide and inspire us along the way.

Amen

I love “Son Rise” services – though I must admit it was rare in New Jersey
to actually see the Sun rise this time of year when it’s usually cloudy and raining!
Still, it’s exciting to wait for that first glimpse of the Sun on Easter morning –
and aren’t we imagining that it’s like Christ himself rising right now, today?

And so, we welcome his presence into our thinking, feeling, conscious lives.

We imagine him rising as we watch for the Sun’s rising –

we imagine Jesus as the Sun itself – an ancient metaphor for Christ.

But when you think about it, the word “sunrise” itself is a metaphor
that describes what we see as our Earth turns.

We are modern people and know that it’s not the Sun moving, but rather we are –
and the time it takes for the Earth to rotate once around completely,
we call a “day”, 24 hours.

In the Bible, it says the Universe was created in 7 days,
but that was before there was an “Earth” to turn.

So, how long is a “day” according to the Bible?

2 Peter 3:8 says ‘...that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years,
and a thousand years as one day.’

So, what does that mean when Jesus says,

“The Son of Man [the True Heir of Humanity], must suffer and die,
but on the third day rise’?

Uh-oh! We don’t need calculators to do the math –

it could be said that Christ is not due back for another millennia!

Willard, p.2

Or we could just take it on faith that 2,000 years – and 3 days ago,
Jesus Christ rose from the tomb and that this took place
in ways that convinced the disciples he was alive.
But our being out here, our physical presence early on Easter Sunday morning,
is testament to the hope that we still expect Christ to show up.

As we gaze skyward from our fixed spot here in Florida, it can seem like
all the Universe is a parade passing by, led by the Sun just for us –
oh, and did you notice we had a second Full Moon this month?
For centuries, humankind in its infancy thought this world really was
the center of the Universe and everything revolved around us.
We can still get stuck in such a perspective – for good or ill results,
especially in matters of politics and religion.
These things deserve our attention,
but also our caution in not being too quick to think we have the whole picture.

But on that early Sunday morning so long ago,
some women came to the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth –
a loved one who had been arrested, tortured, and killed.
They went to properly prepare his dead body for burial,
but found messengers instead – angels who said that he was alive.
They did not see it take place, nor did they see him,
but they knew it was already true that Jesus kept his promise.

And these women were transformed from despair to hope at the realization
that something remarkable had already happened
and their way of looking at the world was changed from then on.
A day that began with dread, became a new day in the life of
these people who experienced it – a day not like any other,
before or since for them.

And the story of their experience and enthusiasm has been passed on
from generation to generation ever since.
It became a new day for these followers of Christ
so that it could become a new day for us, too.

We don't have to ask where the Sun goes at night
or where the stars and the Moon go during the day
because of what science has shown us.
And likewise, the Good News that Christians bring to all the world
is that Christ arose to show us there is more to this life than we know
and we need not be afraid of the new day,
whether on Earth or as it is yet to come in Heaven.

Amen

Luke 24:1-12

¹Very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb,
carrying the spices that they had prepared.

²When they found the stone rolled away from the entrance,

³they went in. But they did not find the body of the Lord [a] Jesus,

⁴and they did not know what to think.

Suddenly two men in shining white clothes
stood beside them.

⁵The women were afraid and bowed to the ground. But the men said,

"Why are you looking in the place of the dead for someone who is alive?"

⁶Jesus isn't here! He has been raised from death.

Remember that while he was still in Galilee, he told you,

⁷"The Son of Man will be handed over to sinners

who will nail him to a cross. But three days later he will rise to life."

⁸Then they remembered what Jesus had said.

⁹⁻¹⁰Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James,

and some other women were the ones who had gone to the tomb.

When they returned, they told the eleven apostles and the others
what had happened.

¹¹The apostles thought it was all nonsense,
and they would not believe.

¹²But Peter ran to the tomb.

And when he stooped down and looked in, he saw only the burial clothes.

Then he returned, wondering what had happened.