



Church of St. John the Evangelist, Elora
March 31 2024 - Easter Sunday
Canon Paul Walker

Well you did it. After 40 days of Lent you came through it.

After 400 years of slavery, after 40 years wandering in the wilderness, after 40 days of being tempted in the wilderness by Satan you came through it.

You came through the wilderness, through the floods, through the fire. You came through the passion, through the betrayal, denial, condemnation and death. You came through the abuse, the mocking, and the rejection. You came through the sealed tomb and the guards.

And through all of that the most unexpected and unexplained mystery happened. The mystery that, like the event of the birth, which struck fear in the hearts of lowly shepherds and in the heart of King Herod in Jerusalem, this unexpected event also struck terror in the hearts of the soldiers at the cross, and terror in the hearts of the women at the tomb. They were terrified.

And no wonder. The earth quaked, the sky turned black, the curtain the temple was torn in two, the tombs of dead were opened and now your tomb is empty.

This is an event that is so unnatural, so peculiar, so contrary to what any of us would expect or begin to

understand under normal circumstances that of course they would be terrified.

But these weren't *normal* circumstances and these weren't *natural* forces. These were cosmic and ancient forces that are at play for any and all of us in every generation: forces of betrayal, denial, abuse, and decay. Forces of scape-goating, suffering and death.

And in all of that you accomplished what any normal person subject to the natural course of events would never ever be able to do. It is the greatest and most unexplained and unnatural mystery of all time.

You rose from the dead.

You overturned the tables outside the temple to show that you could overturn the tables of these cosmic forces, destroy that temple, and rebuild it in three days.

So the angels told us not be afraid and to go and tell the others that they should go to Galilee where you would meet them.

Back to Galilee in the north. Away from the hub-bub of the city; back to the place where you came from. Back to Nazareth where Mary and Joseph were from. Back to your hometown where you first read from the scriptures about the year of the "Lord's favour"; back to the plain where taught the multitude and told them they were blessed; back to the place where you stilled

the storm when we were perishing; back to the place where he turned water into wine in Cana; and back to the place where you healed the paralytic who was lowered through the roof of Simon's mother-in-law's house in Capernaum.

It's much more peaceful there.

It's away from all the things that threaten us and cause us to fear; it's away from all the things that create distractions. Galilee is home.

That's where Matthew came from. It's where Peter, Andrew and James came from. It's where it all began. Of course we would go home to meet you. Home is where we all belong.

Jesus said, "Abide with me and I will abide with you."

"I will make my home with you."

"I will dwell with you and you will be my people."

That's where we long to be. That's where we are reunited with our loved ones again - home. And that's where we are going - home.

"Where are you going?" they asked him. "Come and see."

And Philip and Nathaniel followed him and spent the day with him.

Clopas and his companion, walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, when they arrived at their home he broke

bread and immediately they recognized him and then he vanished.

It's curious isn't it? They had to get outside of the city, away from the place of the crisis and trauma, to have the capacity to encounter the resurrected Jesus.

But whether it was the upper room in Jerusalem, or in Galilee, or on the Emmaus Road or the Damascus Road, the bodily resurrected Jesus met them all and said, "Peace. Put your hand here. Touch me and believe." Or, after a night of not catching any fish he said, "Cast your nets on the other side of the boat." And there were so many fish their nets began to break, and as they came ashore he said, "let us eat something," so they had breakfast together on the beach.

For all of them, when they met him and heard his voice their eyes were opened and they believed that contrary to all the natural course of events, this was the resurrected Jesus, who came through it all, and they were home once again, together.

It is a place that we will be restored with loved ones; and we will encounter them in their resurrected bodies, a new creation, and you will touch them, hold them and eat with them. It is a place called home where there will be no more pain, and every tear will be wiped away. For he will not lose one of them. "Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!