

**Easter Eve 2020: in five parts**  
Rev. Maggie Leidheiser-Stoddard

I.

this is not a sermon.

there will be no artful exposition  
no relatable anecdotes to hook you in  
no profound theological pronouncements

this is not a sermon  
nor a poem, exactly

call it what you will

this is no normal Easter sermon  
because  
this is no normal Easter

II.

this year, we grieve  
for what we've lost  
for what we miss  
for all we cannot have

1. that tasteless wafer - Bread of Heaven  
sticking to the roof of my mouth  
and that sip of holy Blood, saving Blood  
from one cup we all share  
viruses be damned ...

for this we grieve.

2. that familiar spot in "my" pew  
the smiling faces  
the pain of kneeling on a barely-cushioned rail  
confessing all, unloading while anticipating  
sweet forgiveness  
thumbing through a dusty hymnal  
as colored beams shine through

painted glass ...

for this we grieve.

3. little girls in flowered dresses

ribbons in their hair

little boys in new suits

and

the occasional majestic hat

and

thoroughly sanctified vibrations traveling along the floors and benches

as the organ swells

and the brass begins

and I draw a deep breath

ready to sing

the only possible words

*Christ the Lord is risen today!*

for this we grieve.

And yet ...

III.

(with God, there is always

"and yet")

the Truth is

although - like Mary and the other women -

we walk through grief, our eyelids puffy

the Truth is -

like Mary and the other women -

we have everything we need.

we have knowledge, from the stories

the ones that tell us who we are

and what, and whose -

God's created (the 6 days)

God's preserved (the flood & the rainbow)

God's rescued (the Red Sea)

God's nourished (that's Isaiah)  
God's renewed (that's Ezekiel)  
we are God's  
always  
God's.

we have our devotion -- precious and small  
the women had ointments, spices, gentle hands  
we have whispered prayers  
gazing out the window  
off-key singing  
kitchen table worship, lukewarm coffee  
and  
like the women  
we have honest tears.

we have aching emptiness  
that yearns to be  
filled  
hearts seeking transformation  
eyes and ears  
hoping for  
amazement  
minds ripe and ready  
to believe  
the unbelievable:  
the tomb has become a womb.

IV.  
while his battered corpse was sealed inside  
the Spirit got up to her old tricks

She had a plan -- ***she always does***  
and God belly-laughed  
right in Death's smirking face  
and said "Yes it's true  
that Jesus died  
but did you hear  
about my Christ?  
My Christ lives!"

we have a sun, always rising  
and an earth, always moving  
and a Living Lord  
who takes our hands in his  
and says  
exactly  
what we need to hear  
"Do not be afraid."

V.  
so let us go to galilee  
swift feet and fearless hearts  
but how, with no good map?

Thomas was the one who said it:  
Lord, we do not know the way

[it has always been so]

can we do it? go to galilee again?  
can we  
just  
let go  
and  
F  
A  
L  
L  
into his wounded, loving  
arms?  
always outstretched  
always open  
always waiting  
on us.

you drop your spices; I'll drop my plastic eggs  
let's go! he said he'll meet us there!

MAY IT BE SO. Amen.