

Easter Sunday

April 9, 2023 – Order of Worship

TIME OF REFLECTION

“Christians, at their best, are the fools who dare believe in God’s power to call dead things to life.”

~Esau MacCaulley, professor, author, and opinion writer for the New York Times

“There is something indefinitely first-hand about it.... Is there anything quite like it in all of ancient literature?”

~C.H. Dodd (1884-1973), Oxford scholar and professor, on the Gospel of John

“I have been reading poems, romances, vision literature, legends, myths all my life. I know what they are like. I know that none of them is like this.... The reader who doesn’t see this has simply not learned how to read.”

~C.S. Lewis (1898-1963), Oxford scholar and professor, on the Gospel of John

“I accept the resurrection of Jesus not as an invention of the community of disciples, but as an historical event.”

~Pinchas Lapide (1922-1997), Jewish scholar and historian

“We are laid open to infinity

For Easter love has burst His tomb and ours.

Now nothing shelters us from God’s desire –

Not flesh, not sky, not stars, not even sin.

Now glory waits so he can enter in. Now does the dance begin.”

~Elizabeth Rooney (1924-1999), Smith College graduate and poet

“Make no mistake: if He rose at all, it was as His body;
if the cells’ dissolution did not reverse, the molecules reknit,
the amino acids rekindle, the Church will fall.

The stone is rolled back, not papier-mâché, not a stone in a story,

But the vast rock of materiality that in the slow

grinding of time will eclipse for each of us the wide light of day.”

~John Updike (1932-2009) in “Seven Stanzas at Easter”

“The human being is only a reed, the most feeble in nature; but he is a thinking reed.... But when the universe crushes him, the human being becomes still more noble than that which kills him, because he knows that he is dying.... The universe, it does not have a clue.”

~Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), French mathematician

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “Encountering and Believing the Resurrected Christ” – *Pastor Don Willeman*

SERMON PASSAGE – *John 20:1-18 (ESV)*

John 19

³⁸After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. ³⁹Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. ⁴⁰So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. ⁴²So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

John 20

¹Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” ³So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. ⁴Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went

into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples went back to their homes.

¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. ¹²And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. ¹³They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” ¹⁴Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” ¹⁶Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.