



## **New Light Dawning**

**Rev Cate Thorn**

Year B, Easter Day

Isaiah 25:6-9; Mark 16: 1-8

31 March 2024

Not so long ago, just two days gone, with  
Flexions of anger  
And blare of certainty  
We did it, we showed him  
Yeah, he failed us, didn't do what was promised  
Didn't do as we expected – wasn't the Messiah we expected  
Didn't pull together an army to overthrow our oppressors  
Didn't rescue us, sort out injustice, make the baddies pay  
Didn't fix everything  
Make the broken and bad stuff go away  
Make everything right for us  
Nah, we're the victims here.

Yeah, total failure  
But we showed him  
We fixed it  
We nailed him  
Yeah, we did  
We really did  
We ...  
We did ... what?  
What did we do?  
What have we done?

What? ...

Ah, shhh ...

Listen, listening, ears peeled, hearts open

Maybe this is where today begins

With a question, in our asking

New sliver of day dawning breaks, with midwifing women presence.

Holding, nurturing, and companioning women presence.

Anointing, blessing, perfuming and sanctifying life's transition women presence.

With one another, together, they witness something new birthed and they have not the words to contain it.

Wordless witnessing, yet still we tell of it.

What is it that we tell?

Do we tell just this story, of what is said took place.

Are we provoked to tell of how it puzzles us and causes us to wonder more deeply?

Does the unresolved not really ending that's evolved over time into faith statements of certainty, cause us to want to tell of our questioning of such things, to want to unstitch and disclaim?

If we understand that this collection of Jesus stories came together, were woven together to inform, persuade, convince Mark's audience about Jesus' significance, to end like this seems surprising.

If you're one of those people who, upon starting a book, like to check out the ending before deciding to read it, I'm not sure if this is one you'd continue, for it doesn't really conclude, doesn't really end.

What just happened, we might scratch our heads, wondering. This may be the point. Ending this way, it's suggested, that puzzlement

provokes us to go back to the beginning, to start the story again, in modern speak to engage in an iterative process.

I think there's something for us in such provocation. We've faithfully followed this story. We've been with the plot, the main character, the one who's done everything we expected, before he, well, doesn't. Did we miss something, is it us or him?

So we return to the beginning. As we go back over the same story, as we enact over and again this story in same ritual form each year, we find each time it's a bit different, the way the story is, our experience of the ritual is a bit different, we're a bit different. This story doesn't seem to be a fixed in time, fixed knowing thing. Maybe that's why it's called revelation. This story keeps revealing itself in new ways to us, keeps revealing **us** in new ways.

As it transpires, Mark's gospel has three options for an ending. This is the earliest. The other two endings, added later, are more certain, state and claim, tie up the story and make the whole thing credible for later thinking, later audiences. To leave the gospel with the earliest ending is, after all, rather weak, opens all sorts of opportunities for thinking that may evade the certainty of control.

Given the story, the amazed incomprehension that silences the witnessing women, (have you noticed each gospel ends with women witnessing in this way?). Given the story, I think it's a great ending. Why, you may ask? Because their eye witness incomprehension, fear and amazement, permissions us to be amazed and terrified by our not knowing and affirms not knowing, not being certain of this resurrection thing (as it's come to be named), as OK as well. Not knowing is part of life, draws us to enquire and ask and opens us to grow.

This ending Easter story drama of the gospel features characters whose behaviour is far from ideal. Exhibiting behaviour we imagine

would be means for them to be spurned, cast out, excluded: **betraying** Judas Iscariot, **denying** Peter, **scattering**, **abandoning** disciples and, soon, **doubting** Thomas. Yet without them this new life birthing day wouldn't be as it is. Each has place, each is included, as if each is necessary.

We who have come to this place come with our questions, full of uncertainties, aware of betrayals, denials, fleeing abandonments and shadowed by doubts. Maybe we see these as all the reasons we don't, can't belong. Today would suggest they may be the very means by which we know we're included. Not knowing how, causes us to ask, listen, listening, ears pealed, hearts open, in sliver of new day light, we learn the time is now, it is always now that that which is new, which brings life and us to life can be, is being birthed in us.