

# Easter Morning – Share the Love of Christ

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Easter Morning – Acts 10 34-43, Col 3 1-4, John 20 1-18

Today is the perfect day for the Anglican Church of Australia to enter the Season of Hope. Hope! Everything about today's celebration of Jesus who rose from the dead tells of our hope as his followers. The fire is both the ancient symbol of God's presence with us, and a symbol of the new life that raised Jesus from the dead. And the church is filled with flowers to remind everyone of God's gift of life in all its astonishing diversity. Their myriad colours and fragrances, and the joy of gathering them in harmony celebrates God's delight in *their* diversity, and *ours*. Our hope is alive!

The Easter Candle, sharing its living fire with each one of us; the way it's marked to bring together infinity and time; the way its depiction this year of eggs, caterpillar, chrysalis and butterfly speak to us of apparent death being nothing more than the start of life in a new and more striking form; all this says too that our hope is alive! We sing this hope; we walk it in pilgrimage together, following the One who – as we said at our gathering – *passed over from death to life*. Our hope is alive!

Let's think about that hope? We've gathered this morning to celebrate our Lord Jesus Christ '*passing over from death to life*'. It's a staggering reversal of what we think is normal! We're gathered to celebrate this miracle, and the hope it gives us.

I remember those whose feet he washed just a few days earlier. After he did it, he told them he'd go and prepare a place for them in God's house; that he'd come back and take them to be

together with him in that place of life. <sup>Jn14</sup> That's a promise we remember whenever one of us has died. It's our certain hope that Jesus will come and take them with him. And they'll be with him, ready to greet us when it's our time. We can hope that because of what we celebrate today; *Jesus passed over from death to life*. Jesus is alive. Our hope is alive!

Maybe it's hard for us to visualize how this hope might affect the way we live now. For me, we're given a way to understand that effect in today's Gospel – in what we just saw happen for Mary Magdalene. She was lost in the despair of Jesus' death on the cross, and now, weeping before the confusion of a tomb that it seemed to her must have been desecrated. She was utterly gutted of hope.

Then suddenly, the living Jesus calls her by name. One minute, nothing to live for; everything that had given her life any meaning gone. And the next minute, she's literally got hold again of her living, breathing Jesus. He's come for her, and she's fully back in the land of the living. She has hope again. Jesus tells her to go and share that hope with all the others. She's alive again in a totally new way – and it's happened for her *on this side of death*. It has for us too. This is the hope we're given to live *now*!

Mary's experience of renewed life is reflected in our reading from Colossians. *You have been raised with Christ ... for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God*. This happened to Mary; one moment, as good as dead in her despair and horror, and the next, raised to life again by the risen Jesus. In the reading from Acts, we saw a transformed Peter too. Only last Friday we saw him cowed and hopeless. Today, we see him doing as Mary did; taking the hope of Jesus' resurrection to bring the hope of new life to others.

Jesus' resurrection is *our* hope, and it's a hope the world desperately needs. Today we see that clearly. Death is something people fear; something people do all they can to

ignore. It can bleed people of hope. Some use this fear of death to manipulate other people. But if all the poor, frightened, threatened people knew the hope that we share, that in Jesus, our death has already happened, that our new life is in Christ; that we have been raised with him here and now, they could be transformed by that hope.

Nothing prevents physical death from happening for anyone. But people who belong to Jesus have hope because he is alive. People who belong to Jesus have a living hope that's built on trust in his integrity, built on his love for us, and his call to us to a life that has meaning and purpose. It's also built on his promise that at our death, our risen Lord will come for us – call us by name, Life is wonderful with this hope. And with a world in such need of this hope, it's vital that everyone of us shares it.

We were commissioned for this at our baptism. We were called to *share with others, by word and example, the love of Christ and his gospel of reconciliation and hope.* <sup>APBA p. 69</sup>

As we renew our baptismal promises now, let's re-commit to that. Let's put this new life of ours at the service of the One who gave it to us – that same hope – and share it with others. Because he was raised for them too. Amen.