



The Day the Earth Shook

An Easter Message from Archbishop Anne for the Diocese of Algoma

Dear people of God,

With our voices raised in songs of praise and with loud Alleluias returning to our worship, we greet this joyful Eastertide declaring the wonderful news that, “Christ the Lord is risen today.” I pray that you, like the first women at the tomb, will become eyewitnesses in your own contexts of the great truth that the sealed grave has become the empty tomb. And that overcome with joy over the good news of what you hear this Easter morning you will move into our skeptical and broken world echoing the song of praise, “He is Risen! The Lord is Risen indeed!”

When Mary Magdalene and the ‘other Mary’, the same women who had witnessed the gruesome crucifixion and burial of Jesus, went to his tomb on the first day of the week what they expected to see was a grave with a massive stone rolled in front of it that would confirm for them the truth that death always has the final word. Their hearts were filled with sorrow as they walked along, their eyes with tears, their feet dragging as they went with dread towards this final farewell.

But, somewhere along the road to the cemetery, the women left behind the old world of death and destruction where hope never has a chance, where those who ‘have it all’ rule the day, and where peace is rarely seen. Somewhere along the road called *Despair* the women crossed at the border called *Resurrection* and entered a whole new world where life overcomes death, where peace has a chance through those who seek justice, where forgiveness and mercy overcome blame, and where hope for the future runs like a swiftly flowing river in every life.

Jesus of Nazareth, who they had seen dead and buried on Friday was not in his tomb when the women arrived at the grave. The monument to death had been replaced by an empty tomb and their lives and ours have been turned inside out and upside down ever since.

The announcement that first Easter morning was made not with a whisper but in an earth shattering earthquake of seismic proportions. The fault lines of human history shifted away from death and destruction to lives that filled with grace and hope.

At the beginning of the Gospel, it is an angel who announces the news of the birth of Jesus to Mary. And now, at the end of the Gospel, it is an angel who brings the good news of his resurrection with the assuring words, “Do not be afraid.” (Matt. 28.5) Of course, the angel means not to be afraid of his presence, but much more than that not to be afraid of anything – not of death, nor of life. For God is with them through every moment and the room called death is but the doorway to resurrection life.

The wonderful news of Easter is that Jesus is alive. But this is also terrifying news because it means that nothing is the same as it was before. When we cross over the border from *Despair to Resurrection* we are not the same as we were before. This also means that we have to decide where we will stand, who we will stand with, and what we will do in this new and wonderful resurrection world given to us this Easter day.

We will not be alone though, when we push past the fear and choose to live fully and joyfully in the glow of resurrection life, standing with the poor and the outcast and becoming workers for peace and justice. Jesus is with us, just as he promised he would be with the women as they go on their mission and with his disciples as they go on theirs.

“Do not be afraid”, says our Risen Lord, “go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, there they will see me.” (Matt. 28.9) Jesus is already there in the Galilee of our lives....go and see him. Live in him as he already lives in you.

In Eastertide joy, I remain your bishop in Christ,

+Anne: Algoma (Easter 2023)

Easter Sunrise - 2021

