



May 1, 2022 – Easter 3 (C)
Week 2: Reflections on the Resurrection

During the Easter season, Sermons That Work is pleased to present reflections from bishops of The Episcopal Church on the resurrection of our Lord. Check back each week for a brief exploration of how Jesus Christ's rising from the grave changes everything. To listen to this reflection, scan the QR code on this page and subscribe to the Sermons That Work podcast.

In the Gospel of Mark, the women in the resurrection narrative find an empty tomb, but no signs of Jesus. How would you respond if all you encountered was an empty tomb? Would you believe Jesus was alive?

On the one hand, we have the benefit of 2,000 years of Easter celebrations. We know how the story ends. However, the events of the past few years have placed many of us in the posture of the women from Mark's Gospel. We've lived through multiple pandemics: COVID-19, dramatic weather patterns indicating an environmental crisis, a political system which seems broken almost beyond repair, and the acknowledgement of systemic racism embedded in all aspects of American life. At times, it has felt like the empty tomb on Easter morning as we searched for signs of God's presence in the midst of so much pain and despair. Do we believe Jesus is alive?

The women's response to the empty tomb can help us navigate our current circumstances. In order for the women to experience the risen Lord, they had to return to Galilee. Returning to Galilee entails going to the margins, far from the bright lights of the city. Galilee was the place where Jesus healed the sick and fed the hungry, where he drove out demons and preached words of hope, where he restored people to community. In Galilee, we look beyond our own needs and respond compassionately to others. And that's where we'll find God, among the least, the lost and the lonely.

Intractable problems aren't easily resolved but we can make a difference when we collaborate with others as partners in God's vineyard. The question is whether we are willing to journey to Galilee and commit ourselves to the ministry of repentance, reconciliation and restoration. The resurrection isn't a one time event which occurred 2,000 years ago – it has implications for how we structure our lives today. We participate in the resurrection when we work to make the kingdom of God manifest on earth.

Beloved, resurrected life is available this side of the grave. There's an assignment with your name written on it and it's waiting for you in Galilee. In this season of Easter, may we courageously share the love of God with our fellow companions and everyone we encounter along the way. The Good News of Jesus Christ is too amazing to keep to ourselves. So let's journey together to Galilee. Amen.



*This reflection was written by **the Rt. Rev. Phoebe Roaf**. Bishop Roaf grew up in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Following her work as a public policy analyst and an attorney, she was ordained as a priest in the Diocese of Louisiana. She served congregations in New Orleans and Richmond, Va., prior to her ordination and consecration as the 4th Bishop of the Diocese of West Tennessee on May 4, 2019.*