



Moderator's Reflections in Holy Week, 2018

Greetings in the name of the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

Holy Saturday sneaks up on me. I take a deep breath on Palm Sunday and dive into Holy Week. Preparation for the week takes over my life: Morning Prayer each morning; Maundy Thursday's service including foot washing; and the solemnity of Good Friday's reflection on the cross, which at Westwood Church ends with the extinguishing of the Christ candle and silence.

That silence flows into Saturday. In the silence I find Jesus walking with me, in my tears, my despair, my emptiness, into the tomb. He comes to mourn awhile with me, over the ways death and destruction, sin and evil wreak havoc on earth and in the lives of human beings. In the silence a still small voice says, "Sunday is coming." The mourning of the tomb is not the end.

Jesus walks with us through the dry bones of our lives, our communities, our world, he says, "Do you see these bones? They can live again." "How is that possible?" we wonder. The God who raised Jesus Christ to life again, can breathe new life into our burnt-out lives, can breathe new life into our tired and struggling communities and churches, can breathe new life into our hurting and damaged world. God's promised resurrection hope is certain, for Jesus Christ has been raised to life again.

PRAYER:

God of resurrection hope, our hearts burst with the words our voices shout: "Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!"

We thank you that in Jesus Christ you have come among us, understanding the emptiness of despair, the dryness of having no more tears, and the weariness of knowing loss upon loss. Your Son, Jesus Christ, has walked this road, and we thank you that he walked this road for us. At the foot of the cross we marvel at the depth of Jesus' love.

In awe, O God, we turn to the tomb, now empty, for your power is greater than death. God of power and might, we rejoice that you have raised Jesus Christ to life again. We rejoice that that resurrection power has begun its work in our world. We celebrate the signs of new life appearing where despair and hopelessness ruled. Pour out your resurrection power, that we might live in the joy and promise of the resurrection now and forever.

These things we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who has been raised from death to life. Amen.

—*The Rev. Peter Bush, moderator of the 2017 General Assembly*