

Sermon – 27 March 2016 (Easter Day)  
**(Reading Mark 16:1-8)**

**The text for my reflection will be verse 6: “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.”**

On Easter morning the women went to the tomb and found that the heavy stone was rolled away. Instead of finding the dead body of Jesus, they saw an angel who told them that Jesus has risen from the dead. He told them to go and tell his disciples and Peter. He will meet them in Galilee. It is most striking that Peter is singled out. Maybe because he denied previously that he knew Jesus. But the woman just ran away and kept quiet because they knew that no-one in that male dominant society would believe anything they said. Mark definitely did not mince his words when he told the story of Jesus’ resurrection.

I recently read an article about Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, a Swiss American doctor who did refugee relief work and visited children coping with bereavement/death in a concentration/death camp in Poland during the Second World War. According to her it was striking to see that all the drawings of the children on the walls were of butterflies. To her this signalled the children’s urge to escape their bad circumstances in order to be free like butterflies, in order to fly out of their dreadful situation over the barbed wire fences to freedom.

And this is exactly what Jesus did for us. He overcame the dreadful moments to be without God, and He overpowered death so that you and I can be free, free to fly like butterflies from our circumstances and situations that can sometime be unbearable. The good news is that no-one and nothing on this earth or even beyond this earth can stop the movements of our butterfly faith in our Lord and Saviour. Nothing can ever separate us from us loving care, attention, forgiveness and mercy. And this is what we celebrate today, the fact that we are no longer the victims of our own circumstances or even death.

Jesus took out every nail that was hammered on the cross, on our behalf:

- the nail that represents death,
- the nail that represents torture and suffering,

- the nail that represents pain,
- the nail that represents to be without God,
- the nail that represents our sin;
- the nail that represents our hopelessness and human frailty

Yes, you and I are set free by the loving forgiveness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We can go away this morning knowing that as we journey through life we are safe. Despite dreadful circumstances, despite dreadful journeys that can sometimes takes us to hell and back, and despite suffering and pain, we will never be without the presence of God. Jesus went through the valley of shadow and death as a victor, conquering death, hell and darkness to be alive sitting at the right hand of God our Father.

On this Easter Sunday Jesus is giving us wings. May we all become beautiful butterflies flying in the freedom of our faith in the Lord, proclaiming the Good News - He is not dead. He is risen. Hallelujah!

Amen.