

**Acts 10:34-43.** Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

**Mark 16:1-8.** When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side: and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone for they were afraid.

## "Resurrection"

**When the Sabbath was over,  
Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome  
bought spices so that they might go and anoint Jesus.**

Mark 16:1

In 'The Path To New Life', Joan Chittister wrote: 'The important thing to remember is that we are not meant to see the crucifixion as an end point. We are not to center the entire spiritual life there. There is nothing Christian about treating the crucifixion as the acme of the spiritual pursuit and the focus of our faith. The focus of our faith is the awareness that the Christ who lives beyond the cross calls us beyond it as well. It is the resurrection that brings faith to wholeness, to more than the mere acceptance of the dour reality of life here, to what the church to this day calls "this valley of tears." We have reason, the resurrection reminds us, to believe in the ultimate blessedness of life even in the midst of its natural sufferings. Our life, too, the resurrection says, does not end here. The call for the resurrection is to hope. To know that there is life beyond this life. To know that what we know of blessing here is only a fraction of the life to come. Beyond our own resurrections into the stream of life to come is a cosmic world that is pulsating with life in its every dimension. What is here, as we know life now—whatever the questions, the challenges, the demands along the way—has been good. We have grown and achieved and enjoyed and loved and been loved in return. What will come in the mystery of time, we see in the quiet face of Jesus, will be even richer, calmer, more fundamentally enlivening than life as we know it now. In the placid face of Jesus we see the foundational serenity of the universe, the presence of another life that will make this one eventually and eternally, fulfilled. We see, too, the marks on his hands that attest to what it takes to come to the whole of life within us: the willingness to grapple with evil, the strength to give ourselves over to love that is not lust, the determination to make our own lives worthwhile for others, and, finally, the courage to refuse to give in to the forces of spiritual slavery around us. The resurrection, the inner call to the Eternal More, to sense the undying life within us, is the

magnet that keeps us moving through life, in quest of its mystery, in certainty of its truth. Alleluia'.

**But when they got there,  
the stone had been rolled away and the tomb was empty.**

Mark 16:4

Once upon a time, two disciples, who had become dependent on their teacher, were concerned about what they would do as he grew older and one day died. The elder, sensing this, drew the disciples near and told them this story: Once there was a student who was with a teacher for many years. When the teacher felt he was going to die, he wanted to make even his death a lesson. That night, the teacher took a torch, called his student, and set off with him through the forest. Soon they reached the middle of the woods where the teacher extinguished the torch without an explanation. "What is the matter?" asked the student. "The torch has gone out," the teacher answered and walked on. "But," shouted the fearful student, "will you leave me here in the dark?" "No, I will not leave you in the dark," returned his teacher's voice from the surrounding blackness. "I will leave you searching for the light."

(Songs of the Heart by Joan Chittister, p. 8)

**'He has been raised, he is not here!'**

Mark 16:6

"We are alleluia people," Augustine wrote, "and alleluia is our cry. In her poem, "And the Glory", Ann Weems beautifully echoed his sentiments.

The silence breaks into morning.

That One Star lights the world.

The lily spring to life and not even Solomon . . .

Let it begin with singing and never end!

Oh, angels, quit your lamenting!

Oh, pilgrims, upon your knees in tearful prayer,

'Rise up and take your hearts and run'

We who were no people are named anew God's people,

For he who was no more is forevermore.

**But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of  
you in Galilee; there he will see you just as he told you.**

Mark 16:7

Although it's not in the UCC sacramental liturgy for gathering at the Lord's Table, the prayer/poem, "Holy Communion", by Ann Weems, is important for me as I remember Jesus and imagine the words he might say to me.

Eat. Drink. Remember who I am.

Eat. Drink. Remember who I am so that you can remember who you are.

Eat. Drink. Remember who I am so you can remember who I am so you can remember who you are and tell the others.

Eat. Drink. Remember who I am so you can remember who you are and tell the others so that God's people can live in communion . . . in holy communion. Amen.

**So they went out and fled the tomb  
for terror and amazement had seized them.  
They said nothing to anybody for they were afraid.**

Mark 16:8

In her Guatemalan exile, Julia Esquivel wrote the poem,  
'They Have Threatened Us with Resurrection':

'There is something here within us which doesn't let us sleep, which doesn't let us rest, which doesn't stop pounding deep inside, it is the silent, warm weeping of Indian women without their husbands, it is the sad gaze of the children fixed there beyond memory in the very pupil of our eyes, which during sleep, though closed, keep watch in every awakening . . . What keeps us from sleeping is that they have threatened us with resurrection! Because at each nightfall, though exhausted from the endless inventory of killings since 1954, yet we continue to love life, and do not accept their death!

. . . Because in this marathon of Hope, there are always others to relieve us in bearing the courage necessary to arrive at the goal which lies beyond death

. . . Accompany us then on this vigil and you will know what it is to dread. You will then know how marvelous it is to live threatened with resurrection! To dream awake, to keep watch asleep, to live while dying, and to already know oneself resurrected!' Alleluia. Amen.