

Risen

[Colossians 3:1-4](#)

[John 20:1-18](#)

I wonder why Mary did not recognize Jesus? Was it because her eyes were blinded by the light from the angels? Was it because her eyes were filled with tears and in her grief she was not able to see properly? Or was it simply that she did not expect to see him there?

This is perhaps one of my favorite gospel passages. I love the simplicity yet the intimacy of their exchange, Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” It was when he said her name that she realized who it was. Just as the disciples on the road to Emmaus will report – it was when he broke the bread that they recognized Jesus and realized with whom they had been speaking.

When do you recognize Jesus? or the Christ, or the Spirit or whatever name you use for the presence of the divine? I most often recognize the Christ in the Eucharist, in nature, and in conversations with other people who have been second-born. Those conversations may be in person or in reading a book. But how much richer our lives would be if we saw Christ in more places.

Because the resurrected Christ is not limited to one time and place. Jesus would not let Mary hold him, not because they were social distancing but because he was no longer tied to the space-time continuum in the same way. Now he is ascended he is literally everywhere. Gerard Manley Hopkins, a Victorian English poet says,

Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of men's faces.

The resurrected Christ plays in ten thousand places. Ten thousand places at once. And is still as lovely today as he was to Mary in the garden, God sees his loveliness in the features of our faces. Christ is here. Christ is here in each one of us.

Listen again to that very brief reading from the Letter to the Colossians:

“If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.”

Your life is hidden with Christ in God. Not only is Christ hidden in the lives of humanity, and I will add, in the life of all of Creation, but our life is hidden with Christ in God.

Of course the writer does not mean our daily life as householders – putting on a mask to go to the grocery store, walking around the neighborhood – all the things that we do every day. That is not the life that is hidden. The life that is hidden is the real life, the life that is living through us, the life that is expressed by our choice to wear masks, our choice to take care of our bodies, our choice to wave to our neighbors.

It is as if the outer life that we live is a scaffolding and inside the scaffolding something else is growing, something else is being built. Inside the scaffolding, behind big sheets of plastic, transformation is taking place and we are being made new. Within the scaffolding Christ is playing in our lives and we are being reborn.

And so the writer to the Colossians says we should “set our eyes on things that are above not on things that are on the earth.” I think this has been misunderstood many times as meaning that our life in this world is not important, everything is about the life hereafter. But I cannot believe that is true. Last night we heard again the story of creation and how God saw that it was good, and we know that Jesus incarnated into human flesh and by so doing sanctified all of matter.

Christ plays in ten thousand places, God is here and now. But rather than getting hung up on the outer life, let us pay attention to what we are co-creating with God within the scaffolding, behind the plastic sheeting. That is setting our eyes on things that are above” or I might say, setting our eyes on things that are within.

Because that is where we will find the risen Christ.

The risen Christ is living today within you and within me. Within the flock of birds that eat at our bird feeders, and within the cat that stalks them. Christ is within your dearest friend and within the stranger who gets too close. Christ is within your joy and within your grief. Christ is within your laughter and your rage.

The risen Christ is not limited by tombs of stone nor by any defenses that we might try to build against him. The Risen Christ is freed from all limitation, waiting for us to discover him or her in every person, every bird, and every life event. May our eyes, like Mary’s be opened as we hear him call our name.

I close by sharing with you the poem “As Kingfishers Catch Fire” by Hopkins:

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves — goes itself; *myself* it speaks and spells,
Crying *Whát I dó is me: for that I came.*

I say móre: the just man justices;
Keeps grace: thát keeps all his goings graces;
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is —
Chríst — for Chríst plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of men's faces.