

“On the Move” - Stephanie Sorge, 4.19.20

Last week we met Mary in the garden. Today it's a couple of Marys, and they are on the move. Each of the gospel writers gives us a different resurrection account. Though I'll point out that in ALL of them, women are the first to see, talk to, and testify about Jesus. Given the historical context, that's pretty amazing. I also love that the early church wasn't all that concerned about resolving the differences in the accounts. It's almost as if they recognized that the truth of the stories goes far deeper than the particular accounts or details. Those different accounts and particular details are pretty fascinating, though.

Here in Matthew's gospel, after the men guarding the tomb pass out from fear of what they have seen, the women, still standing, receive a message from an angel - “Don't be afraid. I know you're looking for Jesus, but he's not here. He has risen, just as he said - now go and tell his disciples to go ahead to Galilee - he'll meet them there.” These women go, with fear and great joy, and on their way to give the message to the disciples, they encounter Jesus himself. He greets them, and gives the same message - “Tell everyone to meet me in Galilee.”

What a crazy, amazing, astounding series of events! Just imagine, for a moment, that you've witnessed the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus firsthand, then an earthquake, an angel, and Jesus himself! “Fear and great joy” - that just about sums it up.

There is so much movement in this story, and Jesus himself is at the center of it all. He's moved from the tomb to the trail, and then he's on to Galilee. What he came to do has been accomplished, but the work continues. Keep moving. Keep pushing. We've got work to do. Go to all nations. Baptize them. Teach them. Keep moving. Don't stop.

Nearly 2000 years later, we are still on the move. Well, *God* is still on the move, and we try to remain faithful in following where we are called. Two thousand years ago, this small, sectarian movement kept moving. While the spread of Christianity often came through the violence of empire and conquest, here we are today - a global movement.

This week we also mark the 50th anniversary of Earth Day in this country. "Earth Day 1970 [brought together] Republicans and Democrats, rich and poor, urban dwellers and farmers, business and labor leaders. By the end of 1970, the first Earth Day led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of the [Clean Air](#), [Clean Water](#) and [Endangered Species](#) Acts... [Twenty years later,] Earth Day went global, mobilizing 200 million people in 141 countries."¹

At the 50 year mark for Earth Day, we are facing what the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr called "the fierce urgency of now." "Unlike English, Greek has two distinctly different words for "time": chronos and kairos. Chronos is time that is

¹ <https://www.earthday.org/history/>

measured and definite, as of a ticking clock. Kairos, by contrast, signifies the fulfillment of the right action at the right moment... [Paul] Tillich [situated kairos] within moments of profound catastrophe which are ... also moments of unique opportunity. [Tillich described it thus:] “the eternal breaks into the temporal, shaking and transforming it.”²

The first Easter was the epitome of a Kairos moment. In the fear, confusion, and uncertainty following the death of Jesus, the Risen Christ and his followers stayed on the move. Those whose lives had been transformed by the earthly Jesus became the body of Christ, transforming the world after his death and resurrection.

We are certainly at a moment of profound catastrophe. The Coronavirus has exposed just how frail and broken so much of our society and our systems have been. We’ve been running on borrowed time, or more accurately, far too many people in the world have been bearing the burdens of unjust systems that pose lethal threats, especially to the poor, to communities of color, and to the environment.

If Jesus were walking this earth today, I think he’d be part of the environmental movement leadership. He’s be on the front lines of the fights for environmental justice, economic justice, racial justice, and more. The trauma and crisis that we are experiencing right now on a global scale is nothing new to many communities who have been marginalized and oppressed by systems of power and

² <http://www.creationjustice.org/uploads/2/5/4/6/25465131/earthday2020.pdf>

injustice for so long. Those of us in places of privilege are, perhaps, just now starting to feel it.

We have been on the precipice of climate crisis for years, but that crisis has been even harder to see or recognize in palpable ways for so many of us. In places where severe weather, draught, rising sea levels, and other conditions are threatening lives on a widespread basis, the crisis is very real. For many of us, it remains theoretical. Far off. Hard to imagine, really. But as we see so many systems come to a grinding halt in light of the Coronavirus, the thin fibers of our social fabric are becoming apparent to us all.

As Christians we are called to bring the good news to all nations, and that good news is liberation, justice, and peace for all people. For *all* people. That good news is reconciliation and redemption for the whole world - people and planet. That good news is that God's desire for all of creation is life abundant, flourishing in connection and mutuality for all people and creation.

We are at a kairos moment, in a time of very obvious global catastrophe, exposing many of the places where our current way of life is so far from God's intention for our communal life together. Honestly, most of the time it feels way too overwhelming, that the most we can muster is sustaining life behind the false security of closed doors. Sheltering in place until we can return to normal.

Let us learn from those women who grasped the kairos moment and went to the tomb of Jesus. The message is to go, to gather, to teach and preach and spread the good news of God's love for all people that we know in Jesus Christ.

Right now we need to do that responsibly. Sheltering in place, following CDC recommendations, and heeding the advice of the experts for moving through this current crisis are crucial. But it is also crucial that we not lose sight of what this crisis is exposing, and the crisis that has been building for years.

As Easter people, we can't stay in the confines of our own comfortable, safe places and ignore the frightening uncertainty beyond our locked doors. Jesus is on the move. Ready to meet us, continuing to send us out in mission. And he will be with us always, to the end of the age. Amen.