



The Cathedral of St. Andrew - Honolulu

Sermon: Year A - Easter Sunday, April 16, 2017

The Reverend Canon R. K. “Moki” Hino,

I understand why people like to have Easter Sunday services at dawn—even though it's not the best time of day for me, and I'm not what you would call a morning person; but I understand why people like to have Easter services at dawn.

Here's where I'm coming from. When I was a little kid, my mother and my stepfather and my kid brother were horrible at waking up in the morning and they often overslept and were late for work and school. They were late, that is, until they gave me the enviable job of setting my alarm clock, rousing myself, zombying my way toward their bedrooms, and then going in and waking them all up—often to surly grunts and growls, along with a few unpleasant names and biting expletives. It was the way I started every school day and so you can see why I'm not what you would call a morning person.

Yet at the same time, I understand why people like to have Easter Sunday services at dawn; because I can remember one morning of my childhood—the only time in my unchurched childhood—where I felt the presence of Christ, felt the presence of Christ in my midst—and it was, of course, at dawn.

When I was a little kid growing up in southern Guam, we didn't have a lot of paved roads where I lived and the Government of Guam would come in from time to time with big dump trucks full of crushed white coral from the quarries up north, and they would dump it in our streets for us to walk and crunch the tires of our cars on. It was chalky and dusty, but one really nice thing about white coral is that reflects colors incredibly well.

And so one morning before the alarm clock went off, I just woke up, for no reason at all, I just woke up, opened my eyes, and the sun was just coming above the mountains and casting orange and pink hews into the coral on my street just outside my bedroom window and it was like looking at a Pacific island painting by Paul Gaugin or Claude Monet.

And the other thing I remember about it was that it was the first time in my life that I woke up without an alarm clock, and it was the first time in my life that I woke up in the morning and just smiled – I smiled because it was so beautiful, and so peaceful, so calm, so serene, and it was filled with the presence of Christ, a Christ that I didn't even know; but who made sure that he knew that little unchurched me way back when.

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And so, I know how Mary Magdalene feels outside that tomb in Jerusalem this morning. I feel the drudgery of the morning that she feels when she goes to put spices on the body of the one she loved. And she sees him standing there and recognizes him in the glow of the truth of that holy sepulcher Christ light that's mirrored in the orange and pink hues that I saw on my street when I was little kid and Christ reached out to make sure that he knew me—the way he reaches out to all of us, giving us the hope of the resurrection, and the promise of things to come.

Christ came to me in the morning the way he went to Mary Magdalene in the morning, the way he makes himself known to us all the time; not just in the morning, but all the time — if we would just take the time to notice him.

And as you all know, Christ often makes himself known to us in subtle and surprising ways. I have a touchstone to that childhood memory, and when my alarm finally went off that morning and I'd been awake in the peacefulness of my solitude in that Christ presence, the radio blared itself on and play that iconic [song by Cecilio and Kaponu, C&K](#). And whenever I hear that song, it reminds me of that morning when I was a little kid and it reminds me of Easter Sunday. The song goes like this:

*Have you ever seen the yellow mustard mountain?
California sunshine's in the sky
Have you ever seen the dances of the Endowin painted night?*

*There's a happy kind of feeling when sun's out
Rainbow colored countryside can all be seen
Mother Nature you are beautiful, you are the song I sing*

*Everybody you should see it
You've got to feel it
When you're riding down the Highway in the Sun*

*It's a cool refreshing feeling that I get
Endless springtime when the flowers are in bloom
It does something to me that I can't forget and it's there for you*

*Everybody you should see it
You've got to feel it
When you're riding down the Highway in the Sun*

*Everybody you should see it
You've got to feel it
When you're riding down the Highway in the Sun*