



The Cathedral of St. Andrew - Honolulu

Sermon: Year C – Easter Sunday – April 21, 2019: The Sunrise in Kalapana

When I lived and worked in Hilo on the island of Hawai'i, I enjoyed living on the east side of the island because of the spectacular sunrises that we used to have. And from time to time, I would drive an hour down to the beach in Kalapana to a special spot where I discovered that the sunrises were dramatic—dramatic and absolutely beautiful.

Imagine with me, if you will, standing on a black sand beach with the cool sea breeze blowing in your face in the skies beginning to light up in those blue and purple colors that the sun casts before it pops up over the horizon.

And then that incredible burst of bright orange that lights up any clouds that are in the sky and the way it takes the water and turns it into gold and it laps against the black sand on the shore. When I would take the hour to make those early morning drives from Hilo, it was such a treat and a wonderful way to start my day – that along with the gift of being able to jump into the ocean and bask in the colors of the morning sunrise.

And then an added bonus was that I often had the beach all to myself.

And now that I'm in Honolulu and live on the west side of the island of Oahu, from time to time I think back to those early mornings on Hawai'i Island and I wonder to myself, "Why of all people, of all the 7,108,039,224 who live on the planet, why do I get to see these kinds of thing when so many others never will? Why me? I'm just an ordinary guy. Why me? Why us? Why do we get to see this kind of natural beauty around us all the time?"

As we listen to this morning's gospel where Jesus reveals himself to this one woman before he reveals himself to anybody else, I wonder if Mary Magdalene wondered the same thing? "Why me? Why not Peter? Why not John? Why not Mother Mary? Why me?"

And, of course, for us who look back and who know how important Mary Magdalene was to the ministry of Jesus, we understand why he revealed himself to her in the darkness in such a calm and subtle way as the sun began to rise in the skies of dawn on the eastern horizon. She was loyal. She was faithful. She was always at his side, even in death.

"Why me?" she asks. And our answer, of course, is, "Why not?!"

And so, it begs the question, "Why not me? Why not us?" Maybe the point of Easter Sunday 2019 is to see that we are so loved by God, so valued by God, so desired by God that God does reveal God's self to us because we are worthy — we have worth to God. And so, God reveals God's self in the light of a sunrise on the beach at Kalapana, and as I reflect back on those early morning Kalapana trips to see the sunrise, it makes me want to ask: How does God reveal God's self to you? And what are the sunrises of your lives? Where do you feel God's presence? Where do you feel God's love? In the sunrise? At sunset? With your families? In your church? In the stories of your lives?

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God seems reveals God’s self to whomever God can and to whoever is willing to see, to touch, and to know the presence of God.

God does this because we are worthy. And as I’ve heard in countless youth events, “God don’t make no junk!” Every single one of us is worthy. Every single one of us is valued. Every single one of us is loved. Every single one of us is saved.

And our response to God in the knowledge of this wonderful gift? Perhaps it’s to give of ourselves back to God, participating in the resurrection by looking out at others, showing others that they are worthy, valued, loved and saved — just like we are on this Easter Sunday.

We receive so much this morning — love, assurance, salvation, peace, and joy. And now it’s time to give and give with gladness, to give of ourselves, to give back to God what God has given us by ministering to others — the sick, the friendless, the lonely, the needy, the naked, the hungry, the prisoner, the poor.

And so, this morning, especially at The Peace, and also at the altar rail, give of yourself, give of yourself to the community of Christ, join in the throng, build up the body of Christ, reach out to others, and help the Risen Christ be love to the world.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Amen.