

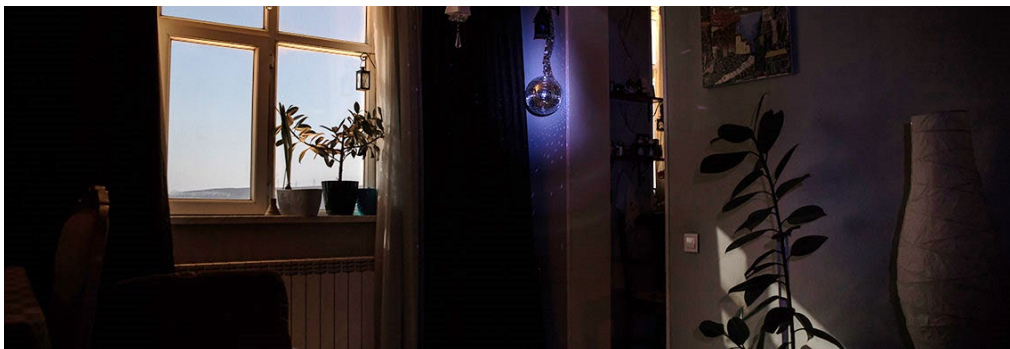
## ***Tombs from Which We Rise – Seeing in the Dark.***

*Madeline Duckett rsm*



The rituals of Easter are now over and we have settled into “risen time” – slowly becoming “ordinary time”. In doing so, we can easily become ‘unaware’ again of the greater significance of what we have celebrated. Yet Easter’s stream of hidden meanings continues to flow into a waiting world desperate for signs of hope in the midst of so much that is dark, violent and uncertain in countless situations and places. This has been so through the ages but is even more the case today when communications closely link us across the globe and beyond - into the outer reaches of the universe itself - often drawing us into the darkness of what is happening rather than into Easter light and joy. And we can easily find ourselves living in ‘tombs’ of darkness, pain, confusion, anger and fear as we grapple with all kinds of issues related to personal and planetary survival and wellbeing. It can sometimes seem as if, in ourselves and in the world around us, there is an unending river of darkness flowing, drawing us into its vortex and towards some hidden “hell” from which we need rescuing.

Into this darkness – unendingly portrayed in news media – comes the Easter message *“He is not here. He is risen...and goes before you into Galilee”* (Matt 28:6-7). For the disciples of Jesus’ time Galilee was **home**, with its beautiful lake and surrounding hills and towns. The Easter message was simple: *“He has gone home...and he will meet you there”*. Jesus we could say has been to hell and back! He returns with a message to all of us still locked in our tombs of darkness, negativity, depression, fear and much else – *“Come home... and I will meet you there”*. But where or what is home?



How might we “come home” in these post-resurrection weeks and months? And what might “rising from our tombs” mean, or even look like? How might we discover the key to the door of the tomb-places from which we long to escape...to rise...and most of all, to go home?

Even as we seek this for ourselves, the tomb-places of our wider world press heavily upon us, adding to the power and size of that huge stone that keeps us imprisoned in darkness, a darkness so deep that it wraps us in a shroud of feared death...for eternity, or so it seems. Yet, as Kerrie put it beautifully in our April reflection, *"All humanity is infused with the capacity to go within the tomb-cave of our heart, into the great nothing and discover..."* Discover what?

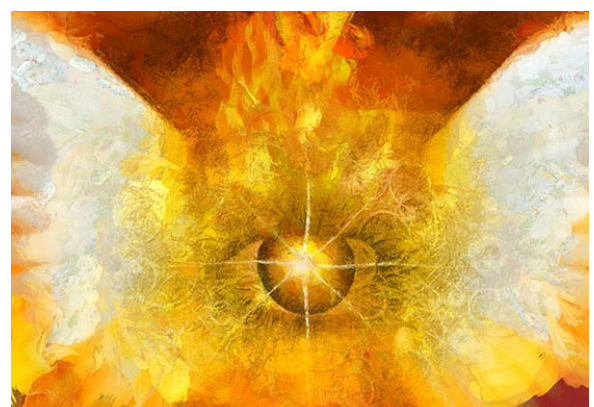
What if we were to discover in some strange intuitive way that we are not alone in that dark place of fear and death, that instead someone *'has gone before us'* and meets us there as a 'presence', in the very heart of that darkness? Could this very 'heart of darkness' be in some strange way a 'home' place? What if our senses became so accustomed to the dark that - as happens for those who are blind, - that we begin to become acutely conscious of 'awarenesses' and 'knowings' received from our other senses? What if we begin to 'see in the dark' and come to sense that being bound in body and enclosed in a tomb is actually an incubation initiating us into a new way of being, seeing and knowing, such as Kerrie described in her April reflection? When this occurs the tomb, ever so slowly, becomes a womb place of birth and becoming. Here a new creation unfolds and manifests itself gently. This 'new creation' happens as we befriend that dark as a creative place of newness with a much larger potential.

All of this may well seem hypothetical and imaginary but it may also be an invitation in this post Easter time...this COVID recovery time; this climate change or self-destruct time; this gender oppression time; this thousands of jobless time; and this many-nation tension time; to begin to see in the dark and to step into a larger potential! Many exist in a communal as well as personal tomb place where darkness and death can seem to have won, and we hunker down allowing them to blind and encase us in ever deepening darkness.



But the thing is that if we do just that, **and** at the same time try to open all of our senses in the darkness and vulnerability of imprisoned existence, we could perhaps begin to sense a small inner movement of air that gently begins to fan the flame of a tiny pilot light still burning within.

And, if we focus deeply into the heart of darkness in prayer and urgent longing, this can slowly evolve into the mighty rush of Spirit fire that sources a newness of life we never could have dreamed possible.



Learning to see - or sense - in the dark is the key to rolling back the great stone that blocks the path out of tomb-living. It requires enormous trust that there IS something in the darkness that can be sensed though not seen or heard, but which must be trusted for emergence of new life to happen. It also requires unquenchable hope when all that is familiar falls away. But it is a powerful means of change – or transformation – that is so much needed for us individually and communally. In this transition process of sensed knowing, we will discover that darkness is not our enemy. It is hidden potential from which newness can be birthed. As for Jesus in the tomb who descended into all the “hells” of his time and all times, as for the growing embryo in the dark womb of its mother, as for the seed hidden deep in the dark, moist earth, so too for us! Like each of these, we too can wait and listen until we finally sense inwardly that, as the psalmist says *“darkness and light are the same to You”* (Ps 139:12). All is one! Light and darkness dwell together, like Yin and Yang that must co-exist and bring forth wholeness.

As we lean into this learning to “see in the dark”, we can begin to recognize even as we watch and wait, the “Emergence” of the phoenix rising from the ashes of world pain that was described in our January reflection. We can begin to see the “Christ soaked universe” of which Ann’s February reflection spoke so well, and the “true colours” of the transformation at work in the Autumn of Tess’ March reflection. All of this comes to a climax of seeing anew in Kerrie’s April reflection which opens us into the ground of being and the heart consciousness. There we can slowly begin to see from a hidden oneness.

All of this requires patient, painful and trustful waiting in darkness, and in the often no-thing-ness of prayer and contemplation. We do this alone and together in our 4 pm CEN time each day. For we somehow know in a subtle, hidden way that together we are helping to harness and direct a new energy of change...a new ripple of hope into the places so much in need of hope and light in our world. We believe and trust that we are calling forth this energy of changed perspective from its tomb place and pointing it towards where Jesus has gone before us and is waiting for us – to Galilee, to home – home to who we really ARE...a growing community which is

