

**Reflection on the Gospel-Easter Vigil Year B
(Mark 16:1-8)**

-Veronica Lawson RSM

At the foot of Mount Macedon, where I spent my whole childhood, stands the lovely Anglican Church of the Resurrection, built in the aftermath of the devastating 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires. Members of both Catholic and Anglican communities had wanted to build one church for the two communities but the respective insurance policies determined otherwise: two churches replaced the two that were destroyed in the fires. The most striking feature of the Anglican Church is Leonard French's stained glass depiction of the resurrection experience of a devastated community, a statement of hope in the face of death and seeming hopelessness. Macedon has risen from the ashes and is once again a vibrant community. The Church of the Resurrection serves as a reminder of the community's faith and provides a context for "re-remembering" events that united its members in unexpected ways. In a particularly graphic way, it brings the lower-key experience of the local community into dialogue with its upper-key Story of the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

We take time at Easter to re-member, re-enact, and re-tell the originating stories of our tradition. We dramatise and celebrate in solemn ritual what we celebrate in lower key every Sunday of the year. In our faith inspired re-telling, all the power and grace of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth are made present to us and to our world. Resurrection faith is a commitment to life.

In Mark's resurrection account the place of death, the tomb, lies empty and the message of life is proclaimed. God's messenger sends the women who have witnessed the death and burial of Jesus to proclaim the news of his resurrection to the male disciples. Some interpret the silence of the women as failure; the male disciples have denied and abandoned Jesus and now the women fail to proclaim the news of the resurrection. Others see the women's silence as the appropriate stance before the wonder of God's power. The women's silence has particular resonance at a time when women are finding the courage to speak out against the abuse they have endured. Might the silence of the women in the gospel story be simply a first century male construct? The gospel narrative itself bears witness to a mission ultimately accomplished.

The global experience of pandemic and the unequal access to vaccines foregrounds the language of death and resurrection at this time. As we enter into the Easter mysteries, we carry with us the chaos of broken communities. We mourn the deaths of 2.72 million people, we pray for order out of the chaos, we ask questions about the provenance of the virus in the other-than-human community and we do all we can to ensure a real return to life for the bereaved, the struggling and the displaced. We join with those who are sharing their resources and re-ordering their way of being in the Earth community in order to make this happen.