

The Moderator's Easter message 2017 Transcript of the Easter video



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Of the many New Testament accounts of Easter, I want to reflect on the story of Mary Magdalene as she walks to Jesus' tomb lost, hopeless, grieving.

Her path would have been very different to this one, but her sense of desolation is a response we can all appreciate.

The life Jesus gave her as he befriended her and called her into the community of his followers, now all that has gone and she has nothing.

I am in the Melbourne suburb of Sunshine with the staff, volunteers and clients of UnitingCare Lentara. How does Mary's story speak into this context?

For Mary hope died on the cross as her friend was crucified. But as she visits the tomb where Jesus' body had been placed she finds it empty.

As she mourns a stranger speaks her name. 'Mary.' In that moment Mary recognises the risen Christ. In the speaking of her name Mary has her hope and her life restored to her.

In the calling of her name Mary knows herself loved again, loved by God and able to see her truest self as beloved and gifted. To be loved is to have meaning and purpose. For the clients of Lentara, this space is their second home. They know they will always be accepted.

The staff and volunteers are about this Easter work of calling people back into life.

Heather assists with Lentara's working for the dole program here at the Devonshire Tea Café. The participants are learning new skills and in the process they are being affirmed as whole human beings.

Mary has hope because Jesus has called her back to life. Jesus has borne the suffering of the world on the cross and has risen in love to love for Mary and all of us.

The Easter gift of hope and newness of life is both universal and particular. Universal because it is available for all and any. Particular because it addresses each one of us in the uniqueness of our lives.

Here at Lentara the staff and volunteers exhibit Christ's hope by meeting people when they are in need.

They offer community; a place of welcome which includes both a response to physical and emotional needs.

This Easter I pray you might hear your name being called by Jesus Christ who speaks your name in love and invites you to be part of God's loving engagement in the world.

This love builds justice, restores hope and stands alongside those who ache with the pain of living.

By living as people who know themselves loved and willing to love our neighbour we live as Easter people named, called, beloved.

Christ is risen!