

## Reflection for Easter Sunrise

There are times in our lives when we feel like we've hit a dead end, where it's hard to see that there is any way forward, when it feels as though we have thoroughly lost our way, where the darkness of whatever situation we are in seems to overwhelm. Dante described such an occasion at the beginning of the *Inferno* in this way: "In the middle of the road of my life, I awoke in a dark wood where the true way was wholly lost." It is the tomb experience that comes when a significant relationship breaks apart or a life's work suddenly loses its meaning or a loved one dies or a life's dream is finally put to rest or we have failed someone we love or they us; whatever experience has us confronting a dead end, a no way out, where our own resources have run dry and we are stuck, as though in a tomb. It's a difficult but critically important place to be and to be in patiently because what it often forces us to do is simply, finally, to look beyond ourselves for what it is that we need. It is where we are most vulnerable to the God of our lives who often comes in through the broken and dead end places. Songwriter Leonard Cohen has a wonderful lyric that goes – "there is a crack, a crack in everything that's how the light gets in... ring the bells that still can ring, forget your perfect offering, there is a crack, a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in."

The story of Easter is a very strange one really. We place at the very center of our faith a victim of violence, a terrible dying, a betrayal of friends, a loss of hope, a broken and defeated man who reached the ultimate dead end discarded in a closed off tomb and we say "this, this is how the light got in." Not through the hard work of a successful man, not through the correct teachings of a Greek scholar or the reasoning faculties of the educated, not through the charisma of a superstar, but through a human being who – and this is the key - received the fear and anger of the people around him and did not **transmit** it on to others but **transformed** it into Love. We all live with fear to some extent; fear of failure and loss and unworthiness and ultimately fear of death, and in our interactions with others, our responses can at times be generated by whatever conscious or unconscious fear is stirring in us. We are a nation eternally at war because of such

fear. We break off relationships because of this fear. We exclude and persecute others because of fear. We go into certain more secure and less fulfilling work because of this fear and so on. And so there is this tendency within us to transfer our own pain out into the world. But this we say at least this one man did not do. Jesus, killed unjustly, returned not to exact revenge but to forgive and reveal God's Love for us. He transformed the pain instead of transmitting it and as a result not only was his own flesh and blood transformed but the world was as well. And through him we are inspired and moved to also be vessels that take the fear of the world that is *around* us and *rooted* in us and transform it in the very cauldron of inner selves into love to create beautiful forms of relationship between one another and all the earth.

And so this is why we gather here this morning to celebrate the eternal and ever-rising presence of love in this world, which has no end and will make a way where there is no way, will give hope where hope has been lost, will weave abundant life out of the very fibers of death. Christ is risen, Christ is risen indeed!