**“The Lord Today Also” Apr. 16, 2017**

**Matt 28:1-10 Pr. H. Adachi**

May the people in the sanctuary be filled with the Grace and Peace of God, our savior and Lord!

How was your Holy Week? I was preparing the Maundy Thursday sermon, Translation of Pastor Brad’s Good Friday sermon, today’s sermon, and also on Thursday last week all the notebook materials of Synod Assembly (from May 11th through 13th) were due. While doing all those things, I was bothered by several breaking news stories….

First was the news about Assad’s chemical weapons attack on the civilians. Then a few days later, the United States launched missiles at a Syrian military base.  However, the Syrian and Russian governments broadcasted news of Assad’s chemical weapon attack was untrue.

For civilians, we do not know what is true, but I feel that the world’s political picture is becoming darker day by day. And considering the latest news about North Korea, currently peaceful cities could quickly become chaotic war zones.

I wondered why we were hearing such news during Holy Week. Reflection upon the events that lead to  Jesus’ crucifixion, the situation worsened very quickly.

The situation that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary experienced 2000 years ago before Jesus’ crucifixion might be similar to what we are experiencing right now. With high expectations and hope, Jesus entered into Jerusalem.  But the situation worsened within a week. All citizens requested Jesus’ crucifixion. The conclusion was Jesus’ death and burial.

For the women, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, they wondered why the conclusion was his death. Although they followed Jesus for 3 years, they wondered if all things they saw might have been just a dream, because Jesus was dead and buried. Sunday morning, they probably wanted to see his actual body so they could anoint his body with oil and pay their respects.

However, the story did not end with Jesus’ burial in the tomb. When they approached the tomb, there was a great earthquake. Then, the angel appeared and said to them: “Do not be afraid, Jesus was risen and will go to Galilee.”

I wonder if they still did not believe because it was so surreal and they did not yet see the resurrected Jesus. Therefore, I think their fears were at least partially continued. The text described: “they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy.” Even though it says “great joy” they still they feared. They had mixed feelings and were not 100% joyful.

Then the incident happened that they were freed from those mixed feelings. While they were rushing to tell the disciples what they saw, Jesus appeared.

Although they were running, Jesus stood in front of them and greeted them. Since they were rushed, initially they may have thought someone was bothering them…but the someone was Jesus.

The words he said were so meaningful.  Although English translation says “greetings” and Japanese translation says “good morning” but the original Greek Bible used the word ”chairete.”  Have you ever heard the meaning of the word?

Original meaning of this word is “be joyful”.  Jesus knew exactly what the two Marys were feeling, who did not believe the resurrection 100%, and still feared and could not be 100% joyful. So, Jesus stood in front of them saying, “Be Joyful, do not be afraid.”

This year, what is the resurrection story telling us, 21st century Christians? Are we not feeling the same mixed feelings that two Marys felt?

Many of us are baptized and gather every Sunday, because Jesus resurrects on Sundays.   However, we are not really rejoicing 100 percent because many of us just recognize the resurrection as ancient history that happened 2000 years ago. When Jesus first stood in front of two Marys and said “Be joyful! Do not be afraid.” it was not the completion of his resurrection.

In the churches of Christ that have lasted 2000 years and continue to endure, the resurrected Jesus tells us, people are baptized and receive the sacraments, the body and blood of Jesus Christ on Sundays. Whenever we are rushing in our lives or troubled by something, like Jesus standing in front of the two Marys, Sundays stand in the midst of our lives asking us to pause and be unafraid.

And when we baptized Christians believe Jesus Christ’s presence in the sacraments and receive them today, Jesus still says “Be Joyful. Do not be afraid,” and comes into our lives. Then, we live our daily lives mindfully walking with Jesus. Amen.