



**Mennonite
Church**
Canada

Resource Centre

From our Churches

Author: Mark Diller Harder

Church: St. Jacobs Mennonite Church

Date: Easter 2009

This resource is part of a larger **From Our Churches** archives available as an inspirational resource to teachers, ministers and others of Mennonite Church Canada. Posted by permission of the author. Permission to reproduce and distribute is granted.

Easter Sunrise Service Monologues

Before Sunrise:

(The sanctuary is still in Good Friday mode – darkness, black cloths, cross has black cloth, candles are extinguished. Each character does their monologue from one of the four outer corners of the sanctuary.)

Thomas

It is early morning – not quite dawn yet. The sun has not yet risen. It is still dark.

I'm lying here with my arms crossed like I usually do. I don't know why that's my physical stance, even when I am asleep. 'Always the skeptic,' they tell me. Always standing at the back, observing and analyzing. I could see this whole thing coming - over the last months, as we starting traveling to Jerusalem. There were little signs that things were going to change, that something big was going to happen. Everyone was more tense. We watched our backs - even if we wouldn't admit it. Jesus was getting more resistance and often the crowd took it out on us disciples. I'm sure there were spies around, and officials and religious bigwigs hiding in the shadows. And even Jesus was talking weird, mumbling things about suffering and betrayals and denials. I just wanted some clarity, some evidence, some open discussion, but who listens to me. And now the whole dream has collapsed and we are left to pick up the pieces.

Peter

It is early morning – not quite dawn yet. The sun has not yet risen. It is still dark.

I can't sleep. I just keep waiting; waiting for that sound that inevitably comes with the first hint of light. It is a sound that will haunt me for the rest of my days – each and every day. The rooster, the cock crowing – announcing to all that I failed, that I couldn't keep it together, that I even denied knowing him. I abandoned Jesus. I feel so guilty. Actually it is more than guilt – it is shame. I'm ashamed to show my face to my friends, to the other disciples as we try to make sense out of what makes no sense. I walk around with eyes pointed to the ground. I

can't even make eye contact. Jesus had called me, "Peter the Rock." Ha! Maybe he should have called me a pebble or something.

The Beloved Disciple

It is early morning – not quite dawn yet. The sun has not yet risen. It is still dark.

I still can't believe he is gone. I loved him so much. I don't think I have ever had anyone else give me as much trust and confidence, love and support as Jesus did. He called me "the Beloved Disciple." And now he is gone. Even when he was hanging on the cross, I couldn't believe it was happening, that Jesus would die - until Jesus looked at me, standing beside his own mother, and said to Mary, "Woman, here is your son." And then to me "Here is your mother." Wow! What a calling. I will love and take care of her for the rest of my life! Jesus often talked about his own baptism, when a voice from heaven, said "You are my Son, the Beloved." Now I am part of that family, part of that calling. I am Beloved.

Mary Magdalene

It is early morning – not quite dawn yet. The sun has not yet risen. It is still dark.

I couldn't sleep all night. To be truthful, I have been crying off and on since Friday. I just can't get that scene out of my head. My Jesus, suffering and dying on the cross. Jesus – he was so full of grace and forgiveness – you could see it, know it, every time you saw his face; every time he looked you in the eyes and spoke your name. And to see his face slowly lose its colour and then its life. I will never forget that image. It was like I was transfixed. I couldn't move. I think I was the last one to finally leave. All the men had left long before. And now I have to go to the tomb – for him, to be with him. Somehow I must protect him, at least protect his body, bring perfumes, show him honour. I need to be the first one to get there before the sun comes up again!

After The Resurrection

(The Easter story from John 20:1-10 has been read. The sanctuary has 'come to life' with the lights turned on, candles lit, black cloths replaced by white and the many flowers and plants brought to the front. These monologues begin in the corners but the characters come to the front and all end up standing together in front of the cross with its white cloth)

Mary Magdalene

Morning has broken. I have seen the Lord!

Can you believe it? I almost missed him. It was like I couldn't see straight. First I had come to the tomb and the stone was gone. Panic! The body had been stolen. I must have come too late! I failed him. I ran and told Peter and the Beloved Disciple. My body was shaking. My eyes kept tearing up. I finally broke down outside the tomb. I just wanted to find the body! And then, and then! Who I thought was the gardener, speaking to me, asking questions... It was my name. He spoke my name. "Mary." And I knew! Right in that instant – I knew! It was Jesus. I saw my Lord. He told me not to hold on to him, and now I don't need to. I feel so free. I can let him go because I saw him. I am going to tell everyone I know!

The Beloved Disciple

Morning has broken. I have seen the Lord!

It was Mary Magdalene who woke Peter and I, each drifting on and off before dawn. She was almost in hysterics. We just ran, we didn't know why or what to expect. It was like a foot race – and I had the edge. I got there first...I stopped suddenly at the edge of the tomb, half off balance, not daring to go in, just seeing the linen wrappings scattered on the ground. I somehow knew that if I took another step, if I entered further, my whole life was about to change. My mind flashed ahead to everything that could have happened – but there was something just beyond what my mind could fathom, something bigger and more amazing, and I couldn't quite grasp, it was beyond reach, unless I took that next step. Peter moved first. He always did. And then I took that step and even the cloth from Jesus' head was neatly rolled up. The world had changed. I just knew it. Deep down I knew he was alive. I saw and believed.

Peter

Morning has broken. I have seen the Lord!

I have seen him with my own eyes. Yes, these eyes. I am looking and seeing again! I can look you in the eye! It all happened so quickly, so fast! Mary just ran in, talking nonsense, but somehow drawing us, urging us back to the tomb. And it was empty – the linens and cloths just lying there. A part of me knew already then that he was alive, that something new and amazing and world-shattering had just happened. The world would never be the same. And then we saw him at the house – he just appeared, like nothing had happened – “Peace be with you.” “Receive the Holy Spirit.” We are just trying to pick our jaws off the ground and he is already sending us out to the world. I would see him again. I knew he wasn't done with me yet. By the beach. He took me aside and asked three times “Do you love me?” “Of course I do,” I blurted. By the third time I knew that the rooster's crow would never bother me again.

Thomas

Morning has broken. I have seen the Lord!

I didn't think I would ever utter those words. Even when the rumours started. The women were crazy in their delusions. The others, also said they saw him, even saw his pierced side and hands. All nonsense, illusions, daydreams – rising out of our collective grief. Let me touch the nail marks and then we'll talk. This went on for a week – a long week where I dared not entertain the possibility even in the far recesses of my mind ...

And then he was right in front of me. He just appeared through closed doors. “Peace be with you.” And he dared me to put my fingers on his hands and side. No more doubting! I stood there open-mouthed. I didn't even move a finger – his voice was proof enough. All I said, all I could say, was “My Lord and my God.”