

## THROUGH CHILDREN'S EYES: EASTER SUNDAY

23 March 2016

Again, at first glance, our artist Julia, aged 8, has given us a literal view of Easter morning. The dark tomb is empty and Jesus has indeed risen. Her work includes elements of Christmas morning and Ascension Day, the full breadth of Jesus' earthly ministry. The deep darkness of the oversized cavernous tomb is reflective of the opening lines of John's gospel, read on Christmas Eve...

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."*

In the maw of the empty dark tomb, Julia has captured the deep darkness which had been overcome by the Light of Christ; she has captured the second person of the Trinity, the Son, the Logos, the Word which is from and with the Father; and she has captured the life that proceeds from the Father and the Son, the life which is the light of all people.

And indeed all people are gathered in front of the rock-faced wall which houses the empty tomb. The vacant bench is laid bare. Eleven souls raise outstretched arms and outstretched fingers to join in communal amazement at what has happened. The simplicity of the group is remarkable – there is no male or female, no Greek or Jew, all are equally represented in community.

To the left, high in the sky, white on a white background, almost hidden behind a cloud, rests the risen Jesus. In a foreshadowing of Ascension Day, Jesus has risen, not only from the grave, but physically from the ground into the clouds. He is Risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Here is the age appropriate scripture for this Sunday upon which Julia has based her work:  
SUNDAY 27 MARCH – EASTER

Things had not gone well for Mary or Martha or Lazarus. Or for any of Jesus' followers like Peter, John or Thomas.

The police had been looking for Jesus. To arrest him for claiming he wanted to overthrow the Roman government. Jesus had said he was the Son of God. Jesus had said he was the Holy Child of God, the one who was anointed to bring the new message of salvation to all people. Jesus had said he was a king. This made the religious leaders and Roman leaders upset. They ordered he be arrested. And he was.

He was arrested by the religious leaders and they told him to stop but he said he could not stop because he was bringing God's word. He said he was the Son of God, but they didn't believe him.

He was brought before the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate who asked him if he was trying to take over the government and make himself the new ruler, the new king. Jesus didn't answer. Pilate asked him if he was a king and Jesus said yes but that his kingdom was not of this world – it was God's kingdom in heaven. Pilate ordered that Jesus be sentenced to death, and that is what happened. Jesus died, in a terrible way with a sign above his head that read "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews".

"There will be no more talk of kings," said Pilate.

"There will be no more talk of a Son of God," said the religious authorities.

Jesus was buried in a stone tomb like a small cave. Some soldiers were put on guard to prevent anyone from taking his body away. The soldiers even put a huge rock in front of the tomb door; nothing was going to get by them.

Two days later, on Easter Sunday morning, Mary from the town of Magdala came to the tomb. Mary was also a follower and friend of Jesus. She came to the tomb with another woman with the hope that the soldiers would let them in to prepare the body with special oils and funeral spices. They were worried the soldiers would say, "No, go away!"

But instead they found everything all mixed up.

The tomb was wide open. The rock was rolled away. And the soldiers were all confused; they didn't know what had happened. One thought there had been an earthquake which moved the large stone.

Mary looked into the tomb to find that it was empty. The linen body wrappings were folded and put down on the floor very neatly. Suddenly there was a bright light and an angel appeared to Mary. The angel told her that Jesus had risen from the dead.

The women ran back to Peter and the other followers of Jesus and told them all that had happened. Peter ran to the tomb too and saw that the soldiers had run away. He looked in and saw the linen cloths folded on the floor. He didn't see any angel. He returned to all the others who were followers of Jesus and they were amazed. Jesus had indeed risen from the dead. Jesus was indeed the Son of God. And they had seen it. Now what were they to do?

