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**Church of the Beatitudes United Church of Christ**

Christ Among Us

*A Sermon by*

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Scripture: Luke 24:36b-48

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🎵 God is still speaking,

I don't know if you have ever entered an analysis, but today I thought I would bring you into my office for the sake of just such a moment. A case for new life:

It is a quiet morning and I hear my phone vibrate and I am reading through my sermon, some commentaries on the resurrection. It is a dear friend whose mother is dying. He has not been sleeping very well and is in a time of unsettlement, which often arrives when a loved one is in the midst of a protracted period of time before death. Heart tired, I type a text back "wazup?" The text immediately pops back: Had a dream. Awed me. Can we talk?" I type back "10 at the office." Then back to me "K."

I throw off my shorts and T shirt and snag a better pair of slacks and a pastor shirt, hunt around for my keys and jump in the escape, turning over in my mind what might be going on and the scripture I just left.

I sneak into the office through the back door, turn on the lights, plug in my computer, and settle into my chair when Dawn contacts me through the intercom, "Hey, didn't know you came in. Your appointment is here."

I walk out, and my friend comes in flushed from a night dream.

"As you know, Ted," he said, "Mom is dying. It has left me almost unable to sleep. I find myself crying at the oddest moments, unable to talk to my wife at one moment, holding on to my kids too long and with others jumpy and explosive with criticisms of them.

"Then last night I took a Xanax. The doctor told me it might help. So I get to sleep and I meet this guy. He is Eurasian, sort of funky guy. He says to me, 'Calm down. Hey, man, I love you. Everything is okay. I've gotcha. You know the drill: everybody dies. How many times have you heard it: I had to die and three days later I arose. You know all this. You have to let go. I've got her.'"

"You are talking Mom here?" He asked.

"You aren't dumb. Sure, your Mom. Me, too."

"Like a lightning bolt. Ted, it hit me like a lightning bolt. My whole body was trembling. I'm talking to Jesus. He's telling me to calm down. Be at peace. And it's Jesus, like in the flesh.

"I start crying now. He takes me in his arms and holds me, says, 'I love you. I have always loved you. It's all right. It has always been all right.' My body chills out. As he holds me, he keeps repeating, 'Peace be with you. Shhh. Peace be with you.'"

“Then I woke up, and I was at peace. I mean, could Jesus come to me?”

We have come to another example of a point of contact with a dying and rising God. On Easter morning, I talked about how, within hours of the women arriving at the tomb, finding the stone rolled away, talking to a man in a white robe, hearing how Jesus would go on before them. These women running out afraid and telling no one. How many people began to hear about what had happened? It was talked about all over. Since those days, how many people have met him? How many Thomases have been confronted inside locked rooms by Jesus Himself? Many people have come to meet Jesus just like the disciples and are blessed with peace in just such ways as these.

In the language of the Jungian School of thought, such a dying and rising one along with other images of goddesses and gods are the fertile arena of archetypes. “The archetype is seen as a purely formal, skeletal concept, which is then fleshed out with imagery, ideas, and motifs. The archetypal form or pattern is inherited but the content is variable, subject to environmental and historical changes.”<sup>1</sup> So the gods and goddesses of antiquity give us broad outlines of patterns that are laid out in our hard wiring, deep down below the level of consciousness. We can catch their activity in our lives through the flesh. Our own lives have put on the bones of these archetypal patterns.

These patterns generate enormous energies for people to use or be driven by in their daily lives. We can find them in our dreams, in fairy stories, legends and myths. We can recognize the Messiah, a dying and rising God, from different stories across cultures. Archetypes are ageless and universal. Each archetypal pattern will vary according to the individual’s experience and energy. An obvious example of the archetype is the story of Jesus birth, life, death and resurrection. This archetype will make contact in different ways according to our own need in our personal memory, nationality and race. Some essential elements of the Christ principle are that He can be selfless, wise, offer mediation, bring peace and a sense of reassurance, act as servant and good shepherd. He brings right order, blessing and love. The images may vary, but the basic emanation is still the same. How one comes into contact with the Christ will add a variance to the numinous valance of feeling positive and negative in the way we envision, respond to, or live out these experiences.

Archetypes are basic human patterns, some of which are innately stronger in some people than in others. Some people seem to change patterns in the course of a life, particularly around midlife. Some people embody one or two archetypal patterns throughout their life.

“Having said this,” I asked, “was this true for you?”

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Samuels, Jung and the Post-Jungians, pg 25

Immediately he responded, “Yes, He was right there Jesus came to me, held me and brought me peace.”

“Can it be true?”

“Was it true?”

“Yes.”

“Yes, it is true. I really believe. I know it’s stupid and makes no sense, but yet I know I am forgiven. I told you some of my stories. It’s all okay, and Mom is okay. Jesus loves me.”

We are witnesses. Jesus comes to us sometimes in dreams, sometimes in a homeless person, sometimes through a friend, yet he comes, bringing peace, hope, love. In a world that sometimes is full to overflowing with anxiety, dis-ease, war and hate. Christ still comes among us. Amen.