



## Easter Vigil

Easter – allowing myself to be surprised anew.

A few months ago, a family moved in, two houses from us. The grandmother appears to be in her eighties and, with her headscarf, she looks and dresses differently from us. Often, she ambles up the street, and when she reaches our driveway, which is at the halfway point, she sits down on the roadside for a breather. Actually, she sits on the rocks that edge the road.

I am charmed at such an unusual sight and I am surprised that an aged woman would choose to sit down in such a place. There are ants and sand and the rocks are hard. She might get run over by passing cars. The old lady, however, seems to bask where she sits. Perhaps in her country of origin people do sit in similar places. It certainly appears that she is used to sitting on the ground, making do with what is available.

When I decided to have a look at her 'resting spot' from her perspective, I was surprised to see how much shade the Nyoongar Trees provide and the cool gentle breezes they bring and to hear the chirps of the different birds as they take off and land in the trees. I realized it had been my issue to be surprised that such charms lived at the end of an ordinary driveway.

The yearly celebration of Easter reminds me always of being able to be surprised anew.

Listening again to the scripture readings, I am awed and silently mouth 'wow'!

Jesus rose from the dead! A continuing, surprising and awesome event in our Christian story.

Of course, I am not alone in my sense of wonder. Many people have shared their own experiences of the surprising events of Easter. In his 2018 Easter message, Pope Francis spoke about the God of surprises. He said that the women were surprised to find angels in the tomb instead of Jesus' body. Mary Magdalen was surprised to find Jesus walking outside the tomb. In each encounter, explains Francis, the people involved were asked to do something. They had to go and tell others about what they had experienced. Even the shepherds, when they had that surprising visit by an angel to announce the birth of the Saviour, were told to go and look for him in Bethlehem.

I believe that God surprises me on a daily basis. This Easter, this old lady has enabled me to remember to be continually open to where gifts and surprises can come from.

Alleluia!

*Wendy Lailey rsj*