

## REFLECTION

### The resurrection of Jesus

Our creeds echo these words: "I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and I accept him as my personal Saviour and Lord." This is what we believe as God's children, which we all affirm and believe in. However, what's interesting about John's account of the encounter between Jesus and Mary Magdalene is that the Gospel depicts Mary's encounter with the risen Lord in images that are decidedly not abstract or intellectual but an emotional and deeply personal experience with the Lord... It presses us to consider ways our faith in the resurrected Jesus, emphasising that it must be as real and physically grounded as that garden scene was for Mary.

In John's Gospel, Jesus cares a lot about seeing and believing. All throughout the account, people are told to look around them and to pay attention to what they see so that they may believe in Jesus. At the beginning of the Gospel, as Jesus calls the first disciples, they are invited to "come and see" (1:39) as they join him on the journey. Once people see things in John's Gospel, they believe.

But when we get to the horrible visions of the Holy Week. Betrayal, arrest, unjust condemnation, death on a cross and burial in a borrowed tomb. Who wants to see that? What are we supposed to see in those events? How are we supposed to believe in LIFE when we see only death? So, we get it when Mary shows up that morning to weep at the tomb. Mary can't let go of Jesus. She isn't ready to relinquish what she thinks she knows about life and death. Mary isn't prepared to let go of control and live in an unfathomable mystery. The world she lived in last week had problems; for sure, they have taken away someone she experienced the real attributes of God, someone she felt accepted by, without discrimination.

And then she sees Jesus standing there and hears him ask, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for? And even as she supposes him to be the gardener, you wonder if she begins to see and believe as she hears his voice. Because she saw and heard Jesus call Lazarus out of the tomb. Because she heard him talk about being the Resurrection and the life. Mary saw the signs of water being converted into wine and feeding the crowd of thousands. Because she heard him telling the disciples all about his being glorified and ascending to God the Father.

Mary wondered, but when Jesus calls her by name, "Mary," that's what it takes for Mary to turn around, away from an empty tomb, and away from seeing and believing in death to seeing and believing in LIFE. Being called by the name "Mary," she sees him in that moment and finally believes. What do you want to see in your life before we can believe that Jesus lives, and that he will never leave you. That he lives and is calling you by name each and every day.

Mary couldn't recognise Jesus at first. Delay recognition of the real presence of God in our midst, like Mary Magdalene, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). John turns the recognition to Jesus calling her name, but Luke gives a eucharistic recognition. Jesus is always with us, calling us by name, but sometimes, we are too occupied to recognise the present of the Divine around us. Even then, Jesus never stops calling us. In our wondering, doubting and contemplations, Jesus calls us by name, wanting us to give him permission to journey with us. Wherever we find ourselves, Jesus calls each one of us, ensuring us of his divine presence. Imagine Mary hearing her name called by Jesus. Do you recognise Jesus' voice when you are called?

How glorious that moment must have been for Mary in the garden. How powerful that word of Resurrection was for her grieved spirit. It was the sound of her name on Jesus' lips that changed everything. The hope for Resurrection for all people is that the living God calls all from darkness into light by name. Yet how quickly that joy can turn into confusion when they perceive that Jesus is far away from them.

Jesus gives us hope to reflect with the image in the garden of Eden; at the beginning of John's Gospel begins, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God", opening in the darkness of the first creation with Jesus, the Word. In the end, Jesus is again in the garden at the first light. But this new creation brings forth forgiveness and new life so that his disciples can begin their calling anew. This is unlike the Garden of Eden, where Adam hid from God when God called him. In the garden, the blame seems to have been placed on the woman, in this garden it was the woman who responded. Mary Magdalene wanted to cling to Jesus, but Jesus sent her out to be the first evangelist to

announce the new creation. When Mary wanted to touch and be with Jesus, Jesus charged Mary to share the resurrection experience with others. Our encounter with Jesus is not just for us but needs to be shared with others. The resurrection story needs to be shared, and we are those entrusted with this message of hope. The sadness of Good Friday is over, and the new day of hope is today, and we have been chosen to be the evangelists of the Resurrection.

Now is our turn. Jesus is saying to future generations of Mary Magdalens, "I need you to be signs of that new life right here and now. I need you in whatever your calling in life is- – to care for one another and for the creation as I have cared for you. In the power of my name, you can do greater works than me. We have a living God with us.

The power of Resurrection moves us because we believe it happened to a real body and will happen again. The power of Resurrection moves God because it happened to Jesus' real body, which had been nursed, fed, tended, wounded, and raised. The word-made-flesh spoke names, brought healing and created a communion.

Like Mary, we long to be known by God.

As Jesus did for Mary, He comes to us not as a general idea or an imagined ghostly figure but as a presence that reaches beyond our minds' powers of knowing and touches our lives in ways we cannot see. They are felt—tasted, touched, smelled, heard, and seen.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is God's promise that all creation will be raised to life with God. All things will be made new in a new heaven and earth in which Christ will be Lord. Easter hope is watching, waiting, and praying for nothing less than this new heaven and new earth and its lasting peace. Easter carries with it the promise of a new life for the church.

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