

THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

March 31, 2024



RISE

when The End isn't the end

by Drew Downs

In rising, Christ destroys death. His new life reveals the end is not the end just as his sacrifice shows the generous grace of God. And this is what we are eager to celebrate.

The resurrection is both the climax of the gospel story and a reflection of God's mission in the world. So then, how do we engage with this mission? In what ways do we see the end of something as not being a true end?

We make sense of this in our sacraments. In the waters of baptism, one life ends and a new one begins. And in the reconciliation of the penitent, we let go of who we were and turn toward who we are to become.

We ought to see other parts of our life with this sacramental wisdom. Like the end of relationships or institutions. We can be so fearful about letting go that we can't see the new life yearning to arrive.

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WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

What Mary Expected

Given all of the action that happens in Jerusalem—from disrupting the temple to the washing of feet, eating the Passover together with the one who would betray them, ominous teaching and comforting goodbyes, the disciples were still unprepared for the turn of events. The brutality and the grieving. Mary, among others, witnessed it all. Going where other disciples couldn't.

She was best positioned of everyone to get all of the information. Catalog it. Figure out what to expect in the days ahead. She alone could speak to nearly everything.

And still, she didn't expect resurrection.

The Passion and Easter, Crucifixion and Resurrection, the cross and the empty tomb: the story of Jesus dying and rising from the dead is central to our faith. And in its every telling is Mary's witness, proclaiming the risen Christ that Easter morning.

What Mary expected says a lot about what we expect. Even when we're taught by church: scripture, tradition, reason: we still struggle to *expect* resurrection. To expect Jesus rising from the dead. Actually keeping his word.

We shouldn't call it a lack of faith nor dismiss it as skepticism. But our false expectations aren't alone. Because Mary had the same. But she changed them and preached the Good News. So go ahead! It's our turn.

With love,
Drew

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FOR SUNDAY

Easter

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Collect

O God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Reading

John 20:1-18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know

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where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Reflection

It shouldn't surprise us that Mary can't see past her own grief. At least, not at first. It covers her attention like a shroud, a veil, that obscures her vision. She can't even see the subject of her grief when he is standing there! But let us not tie grief to the ability to see, but to the greater allure of grief to the grieving. Much like failure feeds insecurity, disappointment fuels grieving. For some, even the disappointment of snapping out of it! Because now they can grieve over reasons to grieve!

It takes a personal connection with Jesus—he speaks her name—to awaken her. Names spoken by loved ones are powerful.

Studies of children show they will sleep through alarm clocks and smoke detectors going off, but wake when Mom quietly says their names. This makes little sense in an abstract objective conception but is sensible in the minds of those who are loved and long to be loved.

As we celebrate the risen Christ, let us awake from our own slumber, grief, or malaise to witness Christ's profound love and grace is very much alive.

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