

THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

April 9, 2023



MARY

and the power of showing up

by Drew Downs

The Easter gospel each year offers a valuable and revealing contrast.

On the one hand, we have a foot race. A competition between disciples to out-do the other. A contest that seems to be as machismo-fueled as it is earnest. One that displays physical speed and endurance *and* deep concern to prove just how important he is by how quickly he responds to the needs of others.

On the other, is Mary, who showed up in the first place. Who offered her concerns, and then returns to dwell and linger. It is no surprise that such a one receives Jesus.

While the Western world is obsessed with competitiveness, certainty, and doing things "right", neither disciple actually wins in any way that matters. The one who gets the time, and the certainty, is the one who lingers, inquires, and honors him.

EASTER

2023

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!

Easter Tired

Something is blooming that is messing with sinuses. This is the time in spring in which sleeping can be difficult. I only got about four hours of sleep last night.

Even as I write this at the start of Holy Week, I feel the tiredness of Easter. Not the tiredness of Holy Week, mind you. That's a whole *other* thing for us. But the tiredness that *Mary* would be feeling that morning. How fitful her sleep must have been. How difficult it would be to get motivated. How reluctant she must be to visit the tomb.

And this has me thinking of our own weariness that we feel compelled to banish because it's Easter and that's not allowed!

Even as parents have wrestled kids into clothes they don't want to wear, brush their hair (even though it hurts), and, if they've got some real stamina, made them brush their teeth!

The weariness of those who have lost their closest friend, or miss their families, or the chronically tired who thought maybe this day would be better than it is.

There's a weariness that accompanies us into Easter that we rarely talk about. As if we're not allowed. But it's also a weariness that can so easily evaporate (given the right conditions). Not forced happiness. But startling, surprising joy. Hope. Fellowship. A laugh, a trumpet, a smile. Expecting death and being once again surprised with life.

With love,
Drew

EASTER

2023

FOR SUNDAY

Easter

April 9, 2023

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.

EASTER

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 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 is exciting to arrive at Easter once again. Saying "alleluia" at Stan Buchanan's funeral last week really felt *good*. It has been hard to not offer such praise during the season of Lent.

In spite of anxiety or fear, frustration or pain, we return again to find the tomb is empty. The story, once again, remains unfinished. And we are greeted with surprise and joy at its returning.

A returning that is promised. If we listen. Much like the guidance is there. If we listen. And so we shouldn't *be* surprised. But we always are. At least a little bit. Because joy always *does* arrive like new birth. When we go looking for it.

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
215 N. 7TH ST TERRE HAUTE IN 47807
812.232.5165

STSTEPHENSTH.ORG