

Easter Reflection

He is Risen. We proclaim these words to one another in the joy of Easter. It is a time of new beginnings as we recall the Easter vigil's rituals: the blessing of the new fire, of the new water, of the newly baptized and the lighting of the paschal candle. The Easter dawn that awakened you softens into the brightness of day. Liturgical celebrations complete, we remain socially distanced due to Covid Pandemic but, while our customary gatherings around our tables are still curtailed, we are carried away on a mystical high of Word and Song energizing us with the fire of faith.

The Resurrection event we celebrate happened over 2,000 years ago yet it does not phase us to announce it as if it happened at dawn today: He is Risen indeed, Risen as He said. We may even proclaim the message carried by Mary Magdalene to the apostles: I have seen the Lord, for truly in one another we have seen Him. We share the message out loud, we speak and sing the alleluias that are so dear to us. No one calls us crazy as we share this truth where in the world of faith to which we belong it is boldly spoken again. He is Risen, Alleluia.

It is time now for quiet reflection on Mary Magdalene's role. We listen to what John is telling us of the Resurrection morning. It was the first day of the week. All would have been weak from sorrow, weighed down by the trauma of the Crucifixion. John¹ is both participant and teller of the story so it is as if we can see the stages of not knowing, of discovery, of awakening for ourselves as we ponder what it was like for each one: Peter, John and Mary Magdalene.

The men leave but Mary stays on, a wondering question on her mind, for she still has not realized He is Risen. We, from the perspective of the future look back in time and see her stay by the tomb weeping and as she stoops to look inside she sees two angels who ask why she is weeping. She no sooner tells them why

¹ John's Gospel, written by an anonymous, second-generation member of the Johannine community, was the last of the four to be written. Sandra Schneiders. *Written That You May Believe*. (New York. Crossroads Publishing. 2003) p. 41

when along comes a man she does not recognize asking her the same question ... “why are you weeping?”
“Who is it you are looking for?”

Just imagine standing in front of Jesus being asked who you are looking for when it is actually Him that you seek! And then the moment that is magical happens, the moment when her eyes are opened. Mary! That loved voice speaks her name. The moment she hears Him speak her name her eyes are opened. Realization dawns on her and she knows what has happened. His Word has given light to her vision, awakened her understanding that the Resurrection has taken place. As surely as Jesus was later recognized in the breaking of the bread he is now recognized by her when Jesus speaks her name. Mary!

Now it is you, the reader, who are brought to full experience of that morning long ago. You are in your prayer room, your chapel, your garden, the place where your intimate meeting with Jesus take place. Now is the time, the opportunity for you to ask to be shown where Jesus has been removed to in your own life. You still hold the spices you brought to anoint his broken body of your Lenten experience, now no longer needed as he Rises to a new level of experience within your consciousness. Like Mary, you recognize His familiar presence and yet, it is so different this year with all the tactile helps we normally get from our worship together now denied us in the virtual experience of a streamed liturgy. We struggle to take it in.

You know it is Jesus still who has come to be with you in prayer. Yet he is transformed in a way you cannot quite describe. Mary’s heart break has healed but your wound is still open for you are carrying with you the concerns of life. Mary’s joy is complete in the confirmation of what she knew all along, that he is the Risen Lord. He is Christ, the anointed one. Now it is your time, my time to be fully present in this moment with Him in prayer where you will surely hear him speak to your heart, each breath a whisper of your name.

A very happy and abundantly blessed Easter to all.

Sister Kathleen Laverty,

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