

[LEADER: THIS ACTIVITY CAN BE USED IN PLACE OF THE CLOSING PRAYER]

Turning toward the Risen Christ

by Joyce Rupp

Reading: John 20:16

Jesus said to her, "Mary." She TURNED and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher).

When Jesus appears to Mary of Magdala in the garden by the empty tomb, there are two significant TURNINGS that move her from intense sorrow to surprising joy. After the angels ask Mary what brings her to the tomb she tells them of her sorrow. Then she "turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus". (John 20:13) Jesus asks Mary why she is weeping and who she is looking for. Mary does not answer directly. Instead, she questions him about where the body has been taken, hoping to go and remove it. This is when the SECOND TURNING occurs. "Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She TURNED and said to Him in Hebrew, 'Robbouni!' (which means Teacher)."

Reflection

Twice Mary TURNS before recognizing the risen Christ. In our lives it may take a number of TURNINGS, both inner and outer, before we recognize how intimately present this Beloved One is with us. In the following prayer **we TURN our bodies as well as our spirits toward the joy of resurrection**. We pray for those like Mary of Magdala who are in the garden of their sorrows and disturbances. We pray they will be encouraged by the Risen One to TURN toward the HOPE and JOY found in the Easter message.

Invitation to Turn

Imagine that you are where Mary of Magdala was, at the entrance to the opened tomb. Pause to look within your life; visit the places that seek the gift of restoration that the empty tomb signifies.

Turn your heart now to the risen Christ. Hear Him call **your name**. Open your entire self to receive what this beloved presence bestows to you. Let this offering rest confidently within you.

Prayer of Turning toward the Risen Christ

Stand, turn, and face east.

Leader: We TURN to You, risen Christ, and pray

Leader: For those whose dreams have been shattered,

All: *may they turn toward restored hope.*

Leader: For those who have grown weary from constant turmoil

All: *may they turn toward peace.*

Leader: For those who feel disheartened,

All: *may they turn toward a spirit of encouragement.*

Leader: For those who have stopped believing in happiness,

All: *may they turn toward a reason to rejoice.*

Turn and face south.

Leader: We TURN to You, risen Christ, and pray

Leader: For those find little value in their work,
All: *may they turn toward fresh motivation.*

Leader: For those with faltering relationships,
All: *may they turn toward a disposition of love.*

Leader: For those whose outlook on life is bleak,
All: *may they turn toward a rekindling of joy.*

Leader: For those who lack self-worth,
All: *may they turn toward their imperishable goodness.*

Turn and face west.

Leader: We TURN to You, risen Christ, and pray

Leader: For those who are sorrowful,
All: *may they turn toward You and find renewed gladness.*

Leader: For those who suffer in body, mind or spirit,
All: *may they turn toward healing.*

Leader: For those in challenging transitions,
All: *may they turn toward trust in Your guidance.*

Leader: For those who have lost their inner direction,
All: *may they turn toward home.*

Turn and face north.

Leader: We TURN to You, risen Christ, and pray

Leader: For those troubled in their faith,
All: *may they turn toward confidence in Your love.*

Leader: For those who feel burdened,
All: *may they turn toward reliance on Your strength.*

Leader: For those seeking vengeance,
All: *may they turn toward a heartfelt desire to forgive.*

Leader: For those who doubt joy will ever arise,
All: *may they turn toward Your resurrection.*

Together:

Risen Christ, we turn to You with full reliance on Your resurrected presence with us here and now. We renew our trust in Your grace to restore our joy when it lies hidden in our entombed self. Turn us again and again toward hope. Open our hearts to recognize You in the garden of our everyday lives. Amen.

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