

Sharing the Good News

from the pen of the Mission Interpreter



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“Mary” Easter!

Christ is Risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia! Happy Easter—or should it be Mary Easter?

Think about Mary on that first Easter morning, all the divergent feelings she must have wrestled with as she journeyed to the tomb. We wrestle with similar disparate feelings now as we approach the empty tomb: joy and pain; hope and despair; longing and fulfillment; peace and anxiety. As on that first Easter morning, we arrive at the tomb with Mary, who came to perform the traditional burial custom of anointing. Mary left her home in the predawn hours and walked to the tomb in faith. She knew a massive stone was covering the entrance, yet she went anyway, trusting that God would make a way out of no way.

Instead of anointing, Mary experiences an encounter that is unimaginable. As she arrives, to her astonishment she sees that the stone had been rolled away. But then she discovers that Jesus isn't there, but, instead, she is greeted by two men in dazzling white garments. The angels ask, “Why are you weeping?” Her reply is that the body of her Lord has been taken away and she doesn't know where it has been laid. When she turns, Jesus is standing there; however, she doesn't recognize him, thinks he must be the gardener. Although he speaks to her, in her grief she cannot discern who it is who is addressing her—*until he says her name, “Mary!”*

In just a few short hours, Mary has traveled a vast emotional landscape: devastating and traumatic grief at the murder of her friend, fear of meeting a similar fate, the intricate honor of maintaining burial traditions, astonishment, confusion, and agony at the tomb, and then—then sheer, abundant and unencumbered joy when Jesus calls her by name!

We know the story, how Mary rushes to share the good news with the rest of the disciples. Mary Magdalene went to anoint Jesus' body and is, instead, anointed as the first evangelist to share the good news.

We live in perplexing times. Grief is real, tombs are real, but *the resurrection is also real*. Like Mary, we have been transformed by God's power and love. Throughout this Easter season and always—in times of confusion, joy, fear, loss, abundance—remember who you are. You are a beloved child of God who has called you by name.

Mary Easter!

Angela! Khabeb in *Living Lutheran*, April. 2022 (adapted)