

EASTER
APRIL 12, 2020
Alive

First 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 Rabbi 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, side by side, 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 asked her, "Why are you weeping?"

She said to them, "They have taken away my Rabbi, 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, "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 Abba God. But go to the sisters and brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Abba and your Abba, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Teacher!". Then she told them he had said these things to her.

Second Reading ~ adapted from Earl Holt in *Celebrating Easter and Spring*

Something happened in the minds and hearts of Jesus' disciples, for whom everything had been lost. A transformation occurred, a radical shift from absolute despair to renewed hope, from a sense of the utter absence of Jesus to a feeling that in some way he was still with them. His death was not the end; it was the beginning. What had died became again lively in the world.

The possibility of transformation and renewal exists. It is in us. All around us are people whose lives, in ways large and small, have been transformed and renewed: those who have overcome the loss of what was most precious to them in the world, those who have won a battle with alcohol or other drugs, those who have transcended the temptation to despair when life was at its deepest night.

Resurrection is not a long ago, unique, and unlikely event, but is potentially present in all human life. It is a promise and a challenge, for it represents the possibility of radical change – transformation – based on a radical sense of hope.

Death threatens us not only at the end of our lives but at every moment, the thousand little deaths of the spirit, the grievances we carry with us, the discouragements and sorrows that weigh us down, the sense of frustration or futility that makes our days dark and our nights dreary. Easter is the promise that we can be reborn; it is the promise of new life. It is the assurance that in the midst of each death, we are in life.

The Easter faith can be expressed in two words: life wins.