

July 22, 2025

Daily Reflections



WHY ARE YOU WEEPING?

By Elisabeth Beall

Today's Gospel

On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him."

Mary stayed outside the tomb weeping. And as she wept, she bent over into the tomb and saw two angels in white sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet where the Body of Jesus had been. And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken my Lord, and I don't know where they laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus there, but did not know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" She thought it was the gardener and said to him, "Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said

to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni,” which means Teacher. Jesus said to her, “Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am going 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 then reported what he told her.

JOHN 20:1-2, 11-18

Reflection

This familiar story, which we had in a different configuration in the Gospel on Easter Sunday, is a beautiful depiction of devotion and loyalty, love and the ups-and-downs of loss. On this Feast of St. Mary Magdalene, it is wonderful to be at her side, to imagine her shock and horror when she saw the empty tomb, to mourn with her at this new and different loss, to experience her blindness and rejoice in her enlightenment.

For don't many of us react too swiftly, without having all the information we need to discern the reality of a situation? Don't too many of us turn away from those around us – even from God – to nurse our wounds and our pain?

As my parents struggle with different health issues, Mary Magdalene's emotional roller coaster on the Sunday after the crucifixion carries more weight for me. Each day my mother has does well in physical therapy, I cannot stop myself from thinking, “Aha! We've reached a new place on this journey to recovery. Days like this will link up and up, and then she'll leave skilled nursing behind her and go home again.”

And each day she is too weak or tired to even attempt physical therapy, she is weepy or her memory ebbs and flows in greater waves, I cannot stop myself from mourning in advance: “This is it. This is our new reality. She's going to keep diminishing – and what will we do then?”

Like Mary Magdalene, what I want is an answer: which way are we going? Is my mother getting better, or is she not? “Why is the Lord not in the tomb? Where have they taken him?”

But life is not typically made up of quick or easy answers (not as quick as Mary Magdalene received hers, when Jesus called to her and she recognized him at last!). Faith, patience, community – those are the tools with which we navigate situations that seem too heavy, too hard, too overwhelming to manage on our own.

And, of course, the truth is that we are not alone – just as Mary Magdalene was

not alone. There were two angels, whom she didn't recognize. Jesus himself was present to her, though she did not immediately realize that it was he.

That is one of the many messages to be distilled from this passage: if we only have ears to hear and eyes to see, we will know that we are not alone – we will know that, although perhaps not on the timeline we would wish for, enlightenment and understanding will come to us. We need only be open to receiving it.



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For Pondering

- Reread the Gospel passage above aloud, slowly. Which verses or phrases resonate with you?

- Think back on a situation that seemed too much to handle. Where did you receive the help you needed to navigate that situation? If something similar were to happen in the future, would you handle it differently?
- What lessons do you glean from the example of Mary Magdalene's faith and devotion?

Traditional Antiphon for St. Mary Magdalene's Feast Day

*O lamp of the world and gleaming pearl,
who by announcing Christ's resurrection merited
to become the "Apostle of the Apostles,"
Mary Magdalene, be ever our loving advocate
with God who has chosen you.
Amen.*

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