

The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed!! Hallelujah!! First of all let me wish you all a very happy Easter! May the risen Christ be with you and guide you in the days to come. Easter is a one of the key festivals for the Church worldwide because without the resurrection there would be no faith and no hope of salvation or eternal life. In the Gospel reading for today we note that Mary Magdalene came to the tomb very early in the morning while it was still dark and saw that the stone that covered the tomb had been rolled away. So she runs back to Peter and John and says, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Peter and John run towards the tomb and though John outruns Peter to the tomb he does not have the courage to enter it and waits for Peter. John looked inside and saw the strips of linen lying there. Peter comes and goes straight into the tomb and finds the linen there as well as the cloth that was wrapped around Jesus head lying in its place separate from the linen and neatly folded. John also goes inside and sees the empty tomb and believes that Jesus has indeed risen from the dead. The empty tomb always calls for a response – a response of faith and a response of hope because death has been defeated and sin has been dealt with.

Mary Magdalene continues to weep. Jesus was the one who had released her from seven demons and now she had been set free by Him. He had given her dignity and self-worth. She could not cope with the missing body of Jesus because she had come in the morning with spices to anoint the body. She was wailing inconsolably. She bends to look inside the tomb and finds two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They ask her why she was weeping – She still does not think anything at all about the resurrection. She says that they have taken my Lord 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 recognize Him. She was so engrossed in her grief that she was not able to see who it was. Jesus asks her 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for? Mary thought he was the gardener and asks him for the body of Jesus if he had taken it. She says, 'Tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus calls her by name – 'Mary' and at once she calls him 'Rabbouni' a strengthened form of 'Rabbi' which means 'my teacher' in Hebrew. Jesus tells her not to hold on to him but to go to the disciples and tell them - I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.

Mary Magdalene is the first apostolic witness of the resurrection as she was sent by the Lord to tell others about his resurrection. She goes and tells the others, 'I have seen the Lord!' We too are called to witness to the resurrection. The resurrection reassures us that our sin is forgiven, because Jesus died on the cross; death has been destroyed, because he rose again; Satan has been defeated and therefore we can overcome him; the Holy Spirit has been given and therefore power is available to enable us to break free from the shackles of the addictive patterns of sin. May we on this Easter day live as the community of the resurrection testifying to the power of the resurrection in our lives.

16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward Him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

17 Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her. (John 20:3-18 NIV)

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