

## HE IS RISEN

It is Sunday and we find ourselves rushing before sunrise with Mary of Magdala through the Jerusalem market, past sleeping dogs and horses, out one of the gates of the ancient walled city. The path to the tomb is just the path for anyone who has dreams that have ended, hopes that have died. Come with Mary if you know what it means to go unrecognized, or if you lost your job, or lost your spouse, or if you were not promoted as you should have been, or .... The tomb is there for any of us if our relationship or marriage is not as happy as it might have been, or if we are deeply disappointed by our children or our parents. The tomb should be our destination if we are concerned about the poor, or the sick or the abused. Whatever fears we may hold, come to the tomb. We all need to be able to go the place of our deepest fear, our greatest sadness, and have them addressed. Our need is not for some idle hope, nor some casual word of optimism, "Cheer up, everything will be all right." We need what only God offers: some divine assurance, some blessed reassurance, that what in our fear we thought was the whole picture is not the whole picture. What we thought was the end is not the end. However large our vision of reality is, it is not large enough to contain God's truth and power. All our fears, about ourselves or others, are never the whole story. God is still in control!

It sometimes seems as if this Easter story is too big to be played in a stone quarry in Jerusalem. How can we understand the vastness of the event by looking in an empty tomb. But come to the empty tomb we must. And we must listen. We must listen to the silence. We must listen to our fears, which brought us to the tomb. And, most importantly, we must listen to the gardener, suddenly present, when he says to Mary, and to us "Why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" We may start to explain "I am looking for hope, my dream, my loved one" the same way that Mary of Magdala started to explain. But Jesus speaks, interrupts, names each of us, the same way he said "Mary." In that moment when we recognize Christ standing before us, we shout with all Christians through the ages and around the world "Jesus is risen! Hallelujah!" The foundation of our life is still rock solid. All our pains and fears, however difficult, are only temporary. "Jesus is risen! Hallelujah!"

My prayer for each of us this Holy Week and Easter is that we will bring our deepest fears and our greatest sadness to the quarry. Jesus IS there, waiting for us. He is waiting to dry our tears and calm our fears. More importantly, He is waiting to show us a new way to live our lives, if we will let Him. First we must let our old life die, so that we may enjoy the resurrection and new life in Him. May we all have a blessed Holy Week and joyous Easter.

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