

## Easter Sunday

April 4, 2021

*Speak, Mary, declaring  
What you saw, wayfaring.  
"The tomb of Christ, who is living,  
The glory of Jesus' resurrection;  
bright angels attesting,  
The shroud and napkin resting."  
Easter Sunday Sequence*

Joy and relief and tears. All at once. In so many moments of life, relief opens floodgates to feelings we were holding just under the surface. Hugging your family for the first time after quarantine. Finding out that test was negative. Ringing the bell after a last round of chemo. Conceiving after infertility. When long waits and hard journeys are over, so many feelings come in one moment. Imagine the wild intertwined emotions of the disciples seeing the empty tomb and resurrected Jesus.

Early in the morning, Mary and Mary returned to the tomb despite their own fears and trepidations. Their love and loyalty are rewarded as their grief turns to joy and they experience the risen Christ. Flooded with conflicting emotions, Mary Magdalene runs, heart pounding, to tell the others. Her message sparks John and Peter to run to the empty tomb to see for themselves. Previously broken and grieving, Mary, John and Peter allow joy to inspire, animate and quite literally move them.

Even now we see light through the darkness of the pandemic. We have vaccines. Spring returns and the Earth comes alive before our eyes. Even now God is turning our sorrow to joy, our desolation to a garden. Our hope for new life swells again, even if the threat is not fully diminished.

Many dangers were still ahead for Mary, John and Peter. In the light of Easter morning, they faced the world with a new confidence, assured by the joy of the Resurrection. They witnessed the fulfillment of God's Covenant. Even more: they witnessed the promise of the New Covenant; the new and eternal Covenant that would sustain them throughout their ministries.

The seasons of Lent and Easter are the tales of two covenants. Both are important relationships and experiences of God. The first is one of longing and waiting, sorrow and repentance. We learn how to reach out to God in the darkness. We come to trust in God, ever-present and deeply compassionate, even when we feel distant. The second speaks of relief, grace and joy. The New Covenant of Resurrection is one of unbridled joy, one given by a God who shares our experiences as humans; a physically present God who knows and has overcome the darkness. At a time where we may have questioned God's presence, they both remind us of a God who perpetually whispers, "I am with you."