

This meditation is from Nathan D. Mitchell, from the booklet, *Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Lent and Easter* (by Liguori Publications).

An Easter Reflection

A Question Not an Answer

You awake abruptly in dim, pre-dawn light. Were you dreaming? Was it something you heard? A tree branch hitting the aluminum siding? Sleet hammering on the roof? A rattling car with a worn-out muffler? Your four-year-old's footsteps padding down the corridor? A dog's yelp? A cat's yeowl? Someone coughing? The almost subliminal sight of a human shadow? Whatever it was, it's left you feeling eerie and uncomfortable, your heart knocking inside your chest cavity, your mind racing with questions.

If you've ever had such an experience, you know something about the way the first Christians reacted to Easter. Nowhere does the New Testament describe the event of Jesus' rising from the dead. What we find instead are accounts of doubt and confusion; reports of sudden recognitions, disappearances, and changes of heart; stories about what happened to people who witnessed Easter's aftermath. Mary Magdalene meets a "stranger" in a garden and doesn't recognize him until he calls her by name (John 20:11–18). Two disciples trudging toward Emmaus meet a "stranger" who joins them for dinner, breaks bread, and—the moment they recognize him—promptly disappears (Luke 24:13–35).

Easter isn't a riddle resolved; it's a question posed. The answer is you, me, and anyone else willing to assume the cost of discipleship—willing to believe, against all odds, that suffering and death are not the final word about who we are or what we will be. The final word is gospel—the gospel that becomes your body, your heart, your feet, your hope turning back the world's despair, your joy beating back the world's sorrow.

"Look at my hands and my feet... touch me and see" (Luke 24:39).