

Mary Magdalene wanted to be a witness. She wanted people to know what Jesus had done for her...how her life had been transformed, through her healing, through her discipleship.

But now, in our gospel account... she finds she is a witness to something else entirely.

She arrived at the place, her heart pounding with exertion or with anxiety, prepared to sit a while by the great stone that sealed the entrance, the enormous stone that could only be moved by the strength of several men.

The stone, that sealed in, her Lord, her Rabbi, dead, these three days. She came in the dark, before dawn, to sit by the stone that confirmed the finality of it, the terrible, unspeakable loss. And she found it had been removed, taken away. She found it, not as she had expected. And she ran from the place.

She ran to the houses where Jesus' friends lay, sleepless, and she pounded on the doors....

The others ran to the tomb, to see for themselves...

No Jesus. No body. Just linen wrappings, incomprehensible, but the beginning of a hint, somewhere at the edges of their consciousness, that something had happened. Something they could not name, something perhaps to fear... something to rejoice in.

Arriving at the place for the second time, Mary watched as the men ran back to convey the news to the other sleepy disciples. The dawn began to edge its way into the sky. With the dawn came her tears, and she wept.

Looking again...Turning her back to the tomb, she found the gardener now standing just in front of her... And just a moment... the length of a heartbeat... she hears the sound of her own name, Mary.... His voice...she knew...The voice of her Lord.

This is how resurrection happens. It begins in the darkness, when we aren't sure of the path before us...when we are waiting for the dawning of a new day, a new direction, a new hope. It is in that darkness that resurrection occurs, when we have relied on our own power and wit and wisdom and sense of self-worth.

In that place of unknowing... comes the moment we feel ready, at last, to admit: we cannot do it ourselves. We need help. We need God. We need a saviour, a fresh vision to show us the way.

It can be so easy, in our discipleship to believe that we know the way that God will take us...it can be so easy to believe that some doors are closed to us, or perhaps there are doors that we do not want to open...stones that we do not want rolled away...

Resurrection came to Mary, who had followed as faithfully as she was able. And so it comes to us, those of us who follow faithfully, those of us who believe ourselves saved but long to be awakened to a fresh understanding of being disciples in the world today.

We follow along on this Christian journey. We try to stay close to God, to Jesus. And on that journey, we try to work out how we are to witness to others the good news of Jesus, in this time and this place...

Mary Magdalene wanted to be a witness. She wanted people to know what Jesus had done for her...how her life had been transformed, through her healing, through her discipleship.

But now she was a witness to something else entirely, the unexpected....

Mary could not explain it but it caused her faith to deepen and grow, to experience God, in a new way...and to share this good news, for her time and place...

Resurrection comes to us as we take another look at what is before us, when we like Mary... look again and are open to God making another way for us to encounter Jesus and share good news...

When we take another look, at what is before us...Resurrection comes.

Jesus speaks our name. He gives us energy for the task at hand. He sends us out to tell others the good news... that there is life after death, loss and betrayal—new, full, abundant life, not just in some far-off heaven, but right here and right now.

He gathers us afresh into community—the community of the faithful, the loving, the questioning, the stumbling, the givers, the receivers, the men, women and children of all ages.

When we look again at what is before us...Jesus gathers all of us into this resurrection community.

It starts in the darkness...and breaks open into the dawn... with hands stretched across a table, reaching out for one another, listening to one another, breaking bread together, lifting our voices in glorious song... making way for the transforming of our hearts and minds, afresh with his plans and purposes.

Resurrection will come, when we are ready to follow, the call of God, in this place, in his way, for this time... our God of the unexpected...who called Mary, who calls us... to look again... in the breaking of every new day. Amen