

## Out of Darkness, Light

"On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb" (John 20:1-9).

Imagine the scene: Mary of Magdala racing to the tomb. We don't know why she went: Was it to grieve, pay her respects, remember...? And all of a sudden, shock, horror! Who rolled the stone away? Now what? So she runs back and goes to find Peter and John, all the while wondering what the empty tomb means.

What does it mean for us? Is it a symbol for our darkness or emptiness that may need to be embraced, if we are to understand the true meaning and significance of life? Undoubtedly, the empty tomb surprises and shocks us, just like it did Mary, because there we see emptiness and death, unaware of its potential to bring new life and light into our own life.

Notice the Gospel writer's use of the word "dark," which generally speaking means "spiritual blindness" in Scripture's lore. Later on in the passage, the writer makes sure to tell us that neither Mary nor the disciples understood, so their world could not have been any darker.

But then, suddenly, the "disciple whom Jesus loved" saw and believed! He grasped the truth without completely understanding it. He made a complete turnaround. No longer was he paralyzed by fear because he understood that, through the Risen Jesus, with Him and in Him, a completely new way of living had been ushered into the world, a resurrected way of being, even in the midst of darkness.

This Gospel passage invites us into the same conversion as the one Mary of Magdala, the disciple whom Jesus loved, Peter, and the other disciples underwent. We are invited to roll away the stones of fear, of anxiety, of doubt from our hearts; to peer with faith into the darkness and uncertainty of the present pandemic and to recognize that, while we may not be able immediately to see it, out of this darkness light will arise. In other words, we are being invited to, perhaps counter-intuitively, run towards the tomb and to be prepared for the surprise of all surprises: that life has triumphed, that come what may, the Risen Lord will vanish pain and suffering, illness and even death.

This Easter, the Crucified One walks with us through the darkness of this pandemic. This Easter, the Risen Lord, the Son of God holds our hand and brings us into the light, a light that never fades. A light eternal.

In the words of St. Jean Marie Vianney:

"Today one grave is open,  
and from it has risen a Sun which will never set,  
a Sun which creates new life.  
This new Sun is the Crucified One,  
the Son of God."

From: Sr. Walter Maher, CCVI