



Notes for Adult discussion groups
On-Line@9 Worship
23 March 2008

New Life

Reading: Matthew 28 v 1-10

After the Sabbath, as Sunday morning was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. Suddenly there was a violent earthquake; an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled the stone away, and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid that they trembled and became like dead men.

The angel spoke to the women. "Do not be afraid," he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has been raised, just as he said. Come here and see the place where he was lying. Go quickly now and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from death, and now he is going to Galilee ahead of you; there you will see him!' Remember what I have told you."

So they left the tomb in a hurry, afraid and yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Peace be with you." They came up to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. "Do not be afraid," Jesus said to them. "Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

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Meditation: Mary Magdalene

I'll never be able to say what it meant to me,
after the horror and the heartache,
the darkness and the despair,
to hear that astonishing news -
Jesus, alive!
I'd lived in a daze until then,
unable to take in the horror of what I'd seen,
the anguish and the agony which he'd borne
with such quiet dignity and awesome courage.
He'd warned us to expect the worst,
and I suppose in our hearts we'd known what was coming
but we'd refused to accept it,
hoping against hope that there might be some other way,
a path less costly, less awful for us all.
But as we walked that morning to the tomb,
all such thoughts were gone,
buried along with our Lord,
life dark, cold, empty,
bereft of meaning.

We were blind to everything in our grief,
scarcely aware even of the ground starting to shake
or light flooding around us,
but when we reached the stone, rolled away from the tomb,
we saw that all right,
and for a moment we just stood there gazing in confusion,
not knowing where to turn or what to say.
That's when it came, the news that took our breath away:
'He is not here.
He has been raised.
Come and see the place where he lay.'
We scarcely dared to look at first, afraid it might all be a dream,
but finally we found the courage,
and it was true,
he was gone! -
just the grave clothes left to show he'd been there.
You can imagine how we felt,
our hearts pounding with excitement
but there was more to come,
things yet more wonderful,
for even as we ran to tell the news,
skipping for sheer delight,
we saw him ahead of us -
Jesus, the man we knew and loved,
arms outstretched in welcome,
waiting to greet us in his old familiar way.
He had risen, just as we'd been told,
death unable to hold him!
Only it wasn't just Jesus who rose that day,
it was all of us:
for there in the garden life began again,
life which we thought had died in us for ever -
hope reborn,
faith renewed,
love rekindled,
joy restored -
and we knew now these could never be destroyed -
the proof was there before us!

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Reflections:

1. What do you think the four highlighted phrases meant to Mary Magdalene?
2. And what do they mean for you today?