

EASTER SUNDAY

Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" John 20:16

When the sun came up, the man who died heard a cock crow. He was still here! He wanted to see the sun again, to feel its warmth on his face, to feel the morning dew on his feet.

He was very damaged, wounded in body and sore in heart. But he realized that, weary as he was, he was not finished yet with the world, and the world was not finished with him.

He got up, and, and groped with his hands along the rock walls of his tomb. His fingers found a crack between stones—the mouth of the cave! And suddenly, at the barest touch of his fingers, the great stone blocking the entrance rolled away.

And so, he thought, I am not yet done with the world; the world is not yet done with me. And God is not yet done with me either.

He walked out into the light, and the light seemed blazing, crazy, after three days shut up inside the black pit. He looked all around and feasted his eyes on everywhere the signs and creatures of spring: almond trees blossoming pink, poppy fields blazing red, figs greening on the trees. He filled his lungs: no longer the dank and rancid air of the tomb, but breezes filled with sweet fragrances.

He saw and felt the glowing desires of every living thing to be born, to grow, to flourish. He understood as never before the creative energy God had bestowed on the earth. And he began to feel the fatigue and heartbreak of the last three days lift from him.

And on slow, sore feet, he retraced his way through the garden. He had been betrayed in a garden, and buried in garden. He came around a corner, through a small grove of olive trees, and near the rock face he saw a woman hovering at the mouth of the tomb. She was peering into the hole, deep into the darkness.

He could tell that she could see nothing, and the nothing was causing her to weep and ring her hands and pick at her blue dress. Some angels approached and asked her why she was crying. He heard her say that he had been taken away, and she couldn't find him. The angels didn't seem to know what to tell her.

But then she turned, and saw him standing by the olives. It was his dearest Magdalene, the disciple he loved so well. And she loved him. But clearly, now, she did not recognize him. Was he so changed by his three days away?

So then *he* asked her, *Woman, why are you weeping?*

She said, *Sir, are you the gardener? Do you know what happened to the body that was laid in this tomb, and what happened to the great stone at the entrance? If you have taken him away, please tell me where he is. My dearest and only wish is to anoint his body properly. When I have done that, my work will be finished; my heart is broken and my life will be done.*

He said, *Mary*. And then she knew. *Teacher!* she cried. She wanted to embrace him. But he held his hand up to ward off her touch. Her touch, which would have been so welcome, so healing, after his long lonely vigil in the dark. But he sensed that for him, now, such embraces were finished. Whatever he had left to do in this world, he could not be held back by human comforts or human desires.

Mary, he said. *do not be broken hearted. That part of our life is done. We have other work to do now, before I go back to God.* I have been away, I have been to the depths. And because of that, everything is different now.

So, Mary, go and tell the men that you have seen me. Go and tell them that every evil act, every error, every wound is redeemed. Death has been defeated. Life, eternal life, is all around them. Go, Mary, walk in the light.

And now, my dear friends, all of you, walk in the light, children, *run* toward the crazy blazing light of Easter. Every terrible thing we've done, every mistake, every hurt is redeemed: Death has been defeated, and life, eternal, is all around us. *Alleluia, Alleluia! Amen*

