

Easter Creed

We believe in God, Maker, Redeemer and Sustainer of Life, without beginning or end, whose life-giving love was let loose on the first Easter Sunday and whose life-giving love we share and proclaim here today.

We believe in God who gave up the divine life and submitted to the darkness and terror of the grave and who enters with us into every darkness and terror we shall ever face.

We believe in God who raised Christ from the death of the grave to glorious new life and who raises our lives from sin and despair to newness and hope again.

We believe in God who met the grief-stricken Mary in the garden and called her into hope by the uttering of her name and who meets us in our grief and gives us courage to hope again by tenderly calling our name.

We believe in God who sent Mary from the garden to be the witness and apostle of the resurrection and who commissions us, like Mary, to be bearers of hope and good news in our world.

We believe in God, Maker, Redeemer and Sustainer of Life, without beginning or end, whose life-giving love was let loose on the first Easter Sunday and whose life-giving love we share and proclaim here today to all women and men, wherever and whoever they are, loved, blessed and called by God, without beginning or end.

Praying like a Woman Nicola Slee

Unfolding the Word



Notes: John 20: 1-18

John 20: 1-18 The Resurrection and Jesus meets Mary Magdalene

The first half of this story of the resurrection is read at Easter Sunday morning mass (20:1-10) and the story is continued from verse 19 on the following Sunday. It is very disappointing that the profound story of Jesus' meeting with Mary Magdalene is not proclaimed and is consigned to a weekday during Easter (20: 11-18).

There is no actual description of the resurrection in this passage. However, the evangelist wants to show that this is not a grave robbery (what thieves fold up the shroud and face veil and place them carefully in the corner?) and it is not a resuscitation like that of Lazarus (he came from the tomb still wrapped in his shroud). Jn 20:9 makes it obvious that it is God who is raising Jesus from the dead.

The reactions of the three people who go to the tomb are very different, Mary is grief-stricken, Peter is confused, but the beloved disciple is the first to realise that Jesus has risen from the dead.

In John's Gospel, some commentators consider that the apostle John is the 'disciple whom Jesus loved,' even though he is never named in the text. Others, however, suggest that the evangelist is drawing the reader into the story and wants us all picture ourselves as the beloved disciple and to think about how we would respond to the resurrection. Would we see and believe or like Peter would we not fully understand?

While Matthew's Gospel gives a short description of Jesus' meeting with Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, this Gospel describes the meeting of Jesus and Mary with great tenderness.

The fact that Mary does not recognise Jesus at first, is John's way of telling us that Jesus is now transformed. He is the resurrected Lord in his glorified state while Mary is still looking for Jesus as he was before his death and resurrection.

His question: "who are you looking for?" is a reminder of Jesus'

first meeting with the two disciples when he asked them who they were looking for (Jn 1:38). They came and they saw and they stayed with Jesus. Mary is now also being reminded to also stay as a follower of Jesus.

The most poignant part of the encounter now follows. Once Jesus calls Mary by name, she recognises him. It is a reminder of Isaiah 43:1-5 when the Lord YHWH says to Israel: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine."² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you."³ For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you."⁴ Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life."⁵ Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you;"

Jesus' response to Mary is difficult to understand. When he tells Mary "do not touch me," he is asking her to change her relationship with him. Michael Mullins explains "Jesus is directing her attention away from her former style of attachment to himself in his earthly life, to a new presence and relationship with him in his glorified state, in communion with his brothers and sisters."

She is then entrusted with a message for the rest of the disciples. "But go to my brothers and sisters and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" As apostle to the apostles, she will first proclaim the resurrection to them and then tell them of their new relationship with the father. Up to this Jesus has spoken of 'the father' and 'my father' but now he speaks of 'your father.' All are now members of Jesus' family of faith with God as father.