

Sermon Easter Vigil

Something Is Different Here!

In our gospel, Mary is in a deep state of grief. Crying uncontrollably. Confused at the sight of the empty tomb. Struggling to hear the good news that the angels proclaim to her about Jesus' resurrection. Pleading with the gardener to tell her about Jesus' whereabouts. Mary is in a deep state of grief.

Until the gardener says her name that is. Then Mary recognizes this person as Jesus, the risen Christ. Her grief, her confusion turns to relief, joy.

When Mary goes to embrace Jesus though, he stops her. The relationship has changed. It cannot be as it was.

Kind of like when our children grow up and become adults (**Image One**: Adult child leaving home). The relationship changes. Even if we are not ready for this change. They don't depend on us financially or emotionally in the same way that they did when they were children. We have to let go of the authority we were given over their lives when they were children. Easier said than done. Especially when we feel our child is messing up their life. We have to trust that we did all we could to raise our children to become well functioning members of their community. Whatever that looks like.

For Jesus, he has invested three years into his disciples. Jesus trusts that Mary, and the others are now ready to carry on what Jesus taught them. They are ready to leave the nest and become contributing members to the proclamation of the gospel (**Image One**). Living it out in word and deed.

Jesus reassures Mary through his commission to her, that she indeed is ready to proclaim the good news. Go tell the others. The risen Christ says to Mary.

Like when we sit down with our adult child who is still living in our basement at 30. And encourage them to find a place of their own. So that they can start living their life with all the responsibilities and joys that come with being an adult. Because we truly believe they are ready (**Image One**).

In any mentor-student relationship, whether parent-child or teacher-student or pastor-congregant or elder-community member, there comes a time when the mentor passes the buck onto the student. For the disciples, including Mary, Easter becomes that time where the resurrected Christ reassures the disciples that they are ready to carry on the ministries of Jesus. They are ready to forgive, heal, and show hospitality. They are ready to face the authorities push back as they try to live out Christ's way of being community in the Empire. Hoping to be a beacon of hope for the poor, marginalized, and vulnerable people living in their communities.

Now of course, like becoming a parent of adult children, where though our relationship changes, this doesn't mean we will not be there for our children when they need us. Jesus doesn't leave the disciples or us to fend for themselves/ourselves (**Image Two:** Parent embracing adult child). On the day of Pentecost, the last day of the Easter season we will see that the disciples will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit that will help them continue to live out Jesus' teachings in the world. Forgiving those who have hurt them. Healing those who are sick. Welcoming those who are marginalized/rejected. Giving hope to the poor, marginalized, and vulnerable peoples living in their communities.

Like the disciples, in our baptism, we too receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, we too receive the promise that God will dwell in us always (**Image Two**). Helping us live out Jesus' teachings. Forgiving those who have hurt us. Healing those who are hurting. Welcoming those who have felt rejected, marginalized by society. Giving hope to the poor, marginalized, and vulnerable peoples living in our community.

Look out the window. The sun has set. Easter has arrived. Christ isn't here in the tomb. Christ has risen. Christ's movement will continue to breathe new life into people through the church for generations to come. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Let us pray, gracious God, as we break into this Easter season, reassure us that you are present with us always. Empower us to see that you have given us the teachings and the tools we need to be your hands and feet in our world. **Amen.**

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