

**Easter Morning Sermon**  
**Rev. Dr. Anne Miner-Pearson**  
**April 17, 2022**  
**Trinity Episcopal Church, Excelsior**

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Our gospel story this Easter morning present us with two questions. One question comes from angels in the tomb. The second question comes from Jesus in the garden. Mary Magdalene is in both places. She arrives while it's still dark on the first day of the week, on the third day after she watched Jesus' body placed in the tomb. When she discovered the stone rolled away, she brings Peter and the other disciples to see. They return to their homes. Mary stays. She doesn't run from the unexpected, unexplained circumstances - the stone rolled away, an empty tomb. She stays, holding the tension of grief and love just a little longer as the sky above her grows lighter. Mary is grounded in the juxtaposition between death and new life, as at the center of two arms of a cross. She stays present, curious and open. Still weeping, she bends to look again into the tomb. Mary takes a second look. She shifts perspective. That's when she sees "two angels dressed in white" and hears the question: "...why are you weeping?"

...why are you weeping?" What a question she must have wondered. Isn't the answer obvious? Why not weep? Signs of death are all around. First, there is a tomb, a structure created to hold a dead body. True, it's empty, but there are signs of a body having been there - burial cloths dotted with dried blood. And what's more, when she came to the tomb, Mary must have arrived with burial spices, like myrrh.

"Why are you weeping?" What a question we ask. Indeed, when there is so much around us to weep about. Beginning with unimaginable deaths in Ukraine and lines of refugees there and other refugee clusters dotted around the world. Weeping about the state of the natural world with unprecedented weather crisis, leaving thousands weeping at loss of lives, property and livelihood. Weeping at the continued gun violence in our streets and in our schools. Weeping at the deep divides in our nation and the absence of any path toward unity. And let's not forget covid deaths and long covid. "why are you weeping?" What a question we ask along with Mary.

So, caught this Easter morning weeping like Mary, we also hear her answer: "They have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they had laid him." Her honesty, clarity and focus are almost disarming. In her love and grief - or maybe because of it -, Mary is able to name the deep source of her weeping: she has lost the center, the direction, the energy of her life. No other answer could fully be the answer. Any other answer would be shallow, fleeting and inconsequential. Mary knows she has lost who grounds and sustains her life. She weeps and names the true, central loss. Her Lord is gone and what's more, she doesn't know where to find that missing center, focus and direction for her life.

Then, open and honest, she turns toward the answer. She shifts from looking at what held death and from whatever she assumed she would find when she set out earlier that day. "...she turns around"....and in the turning, something new begins to unfold. She sees what she couldn't see before. Not that everything is clear and known in that moment for there is still one more question waiting for Mary's answer, our answer. Now, Jesus is the one with a question, not angels. First, he repeats the same question as the angels, ....why are you weeping? Then, he adds his own, " Whom are you looking for?"

Yes, we, like Mary, need to hear that question. Whom are you looking for?" It is not enough to simply weep as important and honest as that is. "Like Mary, we also need to hear a voice focus our attention, our rootlessness, our distractions. With her physical turning, she hears a voice and sees someone. But, Mary, like us, often mistake the source of that voice asking what we're looking for. Maybe it's the gardener. We assume the obvious. We suppose. We pay attention to the loudest voices. We reach for the echoes of past answers. We want the weeping to stop and grab for quick fixes in hopes they will end our confusion and uncertainty.

Yet, again, Mary stays present. She listens more deeply. "Mary"

She hears love speak her name and finds "whom she is looking for". It is Jesus - the resurrected One. It is Jesus Christ, the source of life death can not contain, the center of all life arising from what appears as only death. With Jesus' breath, the same holy breath who brought about all creation in the first beginning, Mary receives her center, direction and focus anew. Jesus' breath speaks her name, inviting Mary to claim her place in God's new creation - the creation with a message of love to share and a community in which to belong.

On this Easter morning, we come to be turned, or if not turned around, at least refocused and renewed. We come to confirm our center, direction and focus. We come to listen more deeply and to hear our name again from down in the center of our being. Spoken there by Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit in our baptism, we are the Body of Christ who continually hear questions and seek together to embody the answers. For God's Love alone has the power to name who we are, to give meaning and focus to our lives and empower us to be a loving presence in a world of weeping, to be a hopeful presence in a world of pain. For Love alone is the answer. Alleluia. Christ is risen. The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.