

Homily at St. Walburge's, Preston - Easter Sunday 2017

(1Cor. 5:7-8; Mk 16:1-7)



We have just heard sung in the Sequence the words, 'Tell us, Mary, what you saw on the way?' On this Easter morning we too ask the same question of Mary Magdalene. What was it like, Mary, to behold the risen Lord, to hear him address you by your own name, and to be told to go and tell Peter, and the world, the news that he had risen from the dead?

On this day of resurrection, the Mother of all solemnities, the example of Mary Magdalene the first evangelist of the resurrection, has much to teach us as we ponder this the greatest of all mysteries. Mary persevered in her attachment and devotion to the Lord. Together with Our Blessed Lady, and the other women, she remained steadfast on Calvary throughout the Lord's suffering and death on the cross. The Magdalene did not abandon Christ in his darkest and neediest moment, and her love for her Lord never wavered. May we too be given the grace to remain faithful to the Lord, especially when times are difficult and trials come our way.

In the garden by the sepulchre when the risen Lord addressed Mary by her own name it was at that moment she recognised him as the master she had known and loved. Christ had passed beyond the power of death to a totally new life, but he did not forget Mary and her friendship. In our journey of faith Christ calls each one of us by name. As with Mary Magdalene, he knows each one of us individually and speaks to our hearts with love and affection. He forgave Mary her many sins and the chance of a new and better life. That same Lord stands ever ready to forgive us our sins and pardon our faults, and to speak our name.

We also hear Mary say in the Sequence, 'Christ my hope is risen. He goes before you into Galilee.' That dawn of the first Easter morn was no ordinary dawn; a new age and a new time had begun, for in the risen Christ all is made new, the old order of sin and death has given way to the power of Christ triumphant. St. Paul urges us to cast out the old yeast or leaven of malice and evil and celebrate the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, for Christ our Passover has been sacrificed.

Dear brothers and sisters, like Mary Magdalene, we too are called to be witnesses in our day to the Lord's resurrection. We do this by leading lives worthy of our baptismal vocation and through the new life breathed into us by the Holy Spirit. We say joyfully and make our own the words of the psalmist, '*This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad!*' (Ps.118:24). Amen.

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