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Tuesday's Gospel: Blessed Are Those Who Weep

Gospel for Tuesday in the 1st
Week of Easter, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Jn* 20:11-18)

Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “Because they have taken away my

Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.”

Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?” 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.” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, “Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”

Mary Magdalene went and said to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Commentary

The sadness and loneliness of Mary Magdalene in this scene is very moving. She had already been there early in the morning and seen the empty tomb. Thinking that someone had removed our Lord's body, she hurried to give this sad news to Peter and the beloved disciple. The two of them came running, but now they have left, and Mary remains next to the empty tomb in tears, thinking she has lost the lifeless body of her Lord.

So great is her sadness that she fails to grasp the wonder of the two angels sitting in the tomb, nor does she even recognize the Teacher's voice when he speaks to her. But when the one she thinks is the gardener calls her by her name, Mary joyfully responds: "*Rabboni!* (which means Teacher)." Jesus had been for Mary the divine

Physician who freed her from seven demons (cf. *Lk* 8:2). Now, next to the tomb, he is her Good Shepherd, the one who “calls his own sheep by name and leads them out . . . for they know his voice” (*Jn* 10:3.4). Mary who had wept bitterly is now comforted (cf. *Mt* 5:4). And Jesus now has to restrain Mary, who doesn’t want to let go of his feet and risk losing him again. He tells her to go and announce the joyful news to his brethren. Before Mary had announced the false news of the theft of Christ’s body from the tomb. Now she will announce the truth: that she has seen the living Lord, who has told her that he will ascend to the Father.

Mary is an example of a person who eagerly seeks the Lord, like the beloved in the Cantic of Canticles: “Upon my bed by night I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him, but found him not; I called him, but

he gave no answer.” But when Mary’s trial of having lost Christ ends, she can cry out: “I found him whom my soul loves. I held him, and would not let him go” (*Song*, 3:1.4). In a world in which the presence of God can seem hidden, Mary’s persevering search is an example to us not to falter in our good deeds each day, where the Risen Jesus awaits us and calls us. And so we too, with our faith renewed, are apostles like Mary Magdalene. She was the first to announce Christ’s resurrection, an ever-new truth that still needs to be announced to the whole world.

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