



The risen one calls us by name

Easter Message,
Rev. Karla Steilmann Franco

Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" 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, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her. (John 20: 15-18)



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May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with each and every one of us. Amen.

Dear sisters and brothers, resurrection stories have always fascinated me. When I read them, I see them as a perfect mix of sensations, reactions and

human actions in the face of the divine, and year after year this takes on a new meaning for me and challenges me to read these stories from new points of view. These stories are so deep that they can only be understood through faith. This is because they not only describe situations that go beyond human rationality but, in fact, give us a glimpse of a small part of divinity.

This passage taken from the Gospel of John is especially challenging because it invites us to see, feel, and read the story from a woman's perspective. It is true that it is John who tells it, but the narrated events were lived and experienced by Mary, a woman who had accompanied and followed Jesus, who had witnessed his miracles and learned with him. She had been a disciple of Jesus and in that very moment she was sitting by the tomb weeping. She cried because he who had given them hope for a different reality, one where everyone was worthy of respect, had died. Perhaps her crying was also from the disappointment of realizing that in the end it was all over. In this passage, Mary presents a completely human picture, a person who is in mourning following a death, an event that is irreversible and unchangeable. Her pain and sadness are so deep that they do not allow her to notice her surroundings or to see that Jesus is there with her and is ALIVE. He calls her by her name and that is when she recognizes him, touches him and, although John does not mention it explicitly, this probably makes her happier than words can describe.

Mary did not realize it at the time, but she, being a woman in a societal context that was hostile to women, was the first witness to the most meaningful event ever to take place, the very one on which the Christian faith is based: the resurrection of Jesus.

I sometimes think about the expression on Mary's face as she recognized the voice of Jesus. I can't help but try to imagine her teary eyes opening more and more in surprise and looking at Jesus. I shudder to imagine the deluge of mixed feelings that must have come over her. Was she scared? How would we have reacted?

The resurrection of Jesus was an incomparable, unique and unrepeatable event that transformed the life of Mary that day, and later transformed countless other lives over the course of history, including our own. I think that Jesus came to teach humans how to be more humane with each other and, as time goes by, I become ever more convinced of this.

That is why we must be vigilant today and always, because, like Mary, the Risen One also calls us and challenges us to open our eyes and recognize him in our surroundings and in our neighbors. Let us not be afraid, because the Risen One is by our side and is driving us to fight for a full and dignified life for all people.

Let us then profess with words and actions that Jesus, our Lord and savior, has risen. Yes, he has truly risen. Amen.

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