

"Is That You?" — April 16, 2017
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St. John 20:1-18

To say that the first Ester was anticlimactic would be a massive understatement, especially to those first responders! There were three of them: Mary Magdalene, Saints Peter, and John, who does not tell us why Mary is with the two disciples. Perhaps to grieve, to remember and give thanks for this Savior who changed her life forever. Maybe she needs some alone time to sort out what the past few days have meant. St. John doesn't tell us.

Mary makes it to Jesus' tomb and discovers the tombstone rolled back and leaves without additional investigation. Mary tells the two disciples and they run to the tomb with St. John beating St. Peter and finding the tomb empty. Nothing in there but the grave clothes.

Mary, now encouraged by the boldness of the other two, wants to take a look for herself. She too sees the place, only now there are two angels, one sitting at the foot where Jesus had been and the other at the head. "Who are you looking for?" asks one of the angels. Mary pleads for the angels to tell her where Jesus' body is. As she turns she sees Jesus but does not recognize him. Must be the gardener, so she asks him if he know where Jesus is. It is not until Jesus calls her by name that she recognizes him. Jesus tells her no touchy-feely stuff but go and tell his disciples which she does.

It is a bizarre and mystifying story. The most important story in human history and the three eye-witnesses have odd responses at best. Mary thinks its grave robbing, St. John sees and believes, St. Peter sees and nothing. After discovering the tomb empty the two disciple simply go home.

Where Are the news channels? The Parade? What about Jesus' predictions? Isn't this exactly like God when God acts in human history? Not too many years ago the Son

of God was born in a stable or cave. A few folks make an appearance, but compared to the enormity of the event not much response. Again, God does what God does in the way God chooses.

Perhaps the message of Easter is for you and I to allow God to be God, to let God do what God does, and to do it in God's timely fashion. Maybe the real power of the story lies there. God operating in history to reshape the world. It is such a wonder to see how differently people respond to God's action. The Older I become the more relaxed I am with God being God. I would never admit this when I was younger. . . I was not wise enough then. I have since discovered that understanding, knowing, perhaps is not what this faith business is all about.

The power of Easter is God doing God's thing and our trusting it, by giving God the freedom to do what needs to be done in our lives, and to lead us where we need to be led. And, oh, by the way, enjoy the ride!

St. John saw and believed. St. Peter took a peek and nothing. Mary recognized Jesus only after he spoke her name. God loves you and me whatever our response may be. That is the "Good News" of the Easter story.

Resurrection comes because God is God. The empty tomb reminds us God is always at work in our world, and in us, doing what only God can do. In humility, without fanfare, and utterly independent, God does God's thing; and our lives will never be the same.

Mary Magdalene came looking for the Jesus who had died. Saints Peter and John were searching because of a possible grave robbery. For what reason have you and I come today? Alleluia. Amen.