

Why did Mary Magdalene go to the tomb on Sunday morning, even more, why did Mary Magdalene go to the tomb on Sunday EARLY morning? She obviously couldn't do anything to finish the burial ceremonies of Jesus, since there was nobody to help her move the stone. She was not naïve. She knew Jesus was dead. There is no reason to think that she was in some sort of denial or some kind of a psychological turmoil. Why did she go to the tomb? The only answer is the simplest and the most straightforward: she loved Jesus. She wanted to be around him, even if it meant simply sitting next to his tomb. That's what we do when we love.

Her reason, her experience, and all the people around her would try to convince her that her love cannot bring him back and therefore makes no sense. All this reason, experience and opinions - all of these would be wrong. There is some profound wisdom in love. There is some profound insight that has to have its source outside of the person that loves. Some profound wisdom and insight that can see God. We are not talking here about sentimental human celebrations of self, nor about some camouflaged attempts at controlling the other; which is what often passes for love these days. Mary's love was real because she was liberated by love of Christ. Her love was real because she didn't go to that tomb to ask for anything or to make herself look or feel better. She went there completely and utterly for him. That completeness, even if a little dimmed by the weakness of human body and soul, opened for her the window into the divine world. The tomb was open. Christ is risen!

How could it be? The tombs are never open, and they are never empty. The tombs are the final threat hanging over mankind. Human reason and experience tell us that no matter what we try to do, we will end up in the tomb. When encountering the One who is love, all this reason and experience must humbly bow. This tomb was empty because God opened his heart and his mind to us.

God wants to make sure that none of those who receive his gift of life will perish; that every one of us gets a chance, a gift, a possibility of eternal life because God is persistent and his gift is complete. He is also the one who loves. This is how Mary Magdalene, with her pure stubbornness of love, became an image of the stubborn love of God that does not agree to the death of his people. Without being aware of this, she became a reflection of the one she loved so much. At the very heart of her love was the recognition that He already loved her before she met him.

The liturgy of Easter Sunday and the next five weeks wants us to look stubbornly and persistently into the empty tomb of Christ. Shocking determination brings to our eyes the symbol of the defeated death to make sure that we understand how profoundly the love of God, expressed on the cross, transforms the whole world. We can trust him completely because he loved us first, when we were still sinners, nothing can change his love.

"I tell you, she had the virtue of perseverance. You showed this, dearest Magdalen, when you were seeking your beloved Master after not finding him in the place where you had laid him. So, oh Magdalen, love, you were beside yourself; you had no heart, since it was buried with your dearest Master and our dear Savior. But you took it upon yourself to find your dear Jesus. You didn't give up; you didn't stop grieving. How commendably you acted! For you found out that by persevering you were able to find your Master."

St Catherine of Siena

"The dear Magdalen took up this shield in such a way that she thought no more of herself but with true heart clothed herself in Christ crucified. She no longer turned to prestige or grandeur or her own vanities. She took no more pleasure or delight in the world. She didn't think or worry about anything but

how she could follow Christ. No sooner had she set her affection on him and come to know herself than she embraced him and took the path of lowliness. For God's sake she despised herself, for she saw that there is no other way to follow or to please him. She realized that she was the lowliest of all people. She was no more self-conscious than a drunken woman, whether alone or with others. Otherwise she would never have been among those soldiers of Pilate, nor would she have gone and stayed alone at the tomb. Love kept her from thinking, "What will it look like? Will people speak ill of me because I am rich and beautiful?" Her thoughts weren't here, but only on how she might find and follow her Master. She, then, is the companion I am giving you. I want you to follow her because she knew the way so well that she has been made our teacher."

St. Catherine of Siena

Dear Friends of Saint Catherine,

May this Feast of Resurrection of Jesus bring you all joy and happiness. May He be your strength and hope.