

REFLECTION

Mary Magdalene and two other women who, even in their extreme grief, rise very early, after the Sabbath was over, to take the spices they bought and hurry to the tomb of Jesus. They planned to anoint His Body properly because it was not done at the time of His burial due to the onset of the Sabbath. They had planned all of this well ahead of their very early departure. How is it, then, that on their way, they are obsessing about who would roll away the stone sealing the tomb's entry? Where were Peter and the rest of those male apostles? The women's initial planning omitted a very large obstacle to their heartbreaking yet loving task.

How strange it was to Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome to see the stone rolled away as they neared the tomb! Mary Magdalene appears to be a courageous figure, doesn't she? She so loved the Lord that perhaps her concern about the well being of His Body propelled her inside. Much to her surprise, there is a stranger, a young man dressed all in white, waiting there. Were the women "struck with amazement" as Mark says or were they terrified, frozen to their places, by the stranger's presence? What was he doing there? He tells them that Jesus has risen and will meet them in Galilee, as He already told them He would do. The stranger directs them to give Peter and the rest of the disciples this message. The women flee, "frightened out of their wits", but tell no one of this nonsensical experience. Where IS Jesus? They verified Jesus was not in the tomb.

Even after all Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome had heard and witnessed during Jesus's public life, they are still baffled and frightened when they do not find His Body in the tomb. What they experience is impossible: how can Jesus be in Galilee? He's dead. They want to rejoice but are afraid and confused. They run away and tell no one, according to Mark's gospel.

Their fear can be seen as similar to our own when we encounter unusual circumstances. Fear limits understanding, acceptance, and the ability to fully grasp the love Jesus has for each of us, stranger and friend alike. Where do we find the Risen One in our lives? Are we open to sharing our Lord's exceptional love?